

IMMORTALITY PROVED
BY THE
TESTIMONY OF SENSE:
IN WHICH IS CONTEMPLATED
THE DOCTRINE OF SPECTRES,
AND THE
EXISTENCE OF A PARTICULAR SPECTRE.
ADDRESSED TO THE CANDOR
OF THIS
ENLIGHTENED AGE.



BY ABRAHAM CUMMINGS.

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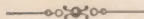
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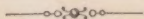
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Republished, *verbatim et literatim*, by J. L. LOVELL, Yarmouth, Me.

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SECTION I.

The arguments considered which oppose the doctrine of Spectres.

AMONG the opinions of the present day, which render it neither clear nor dark, is that of materialism, which maintains the position that all exercises of the mind are the exercises of matter more or less refined and organized: Therefore, when this material organization ceases, all cogitation must cease: Body and soul, life and intelligence die together. Thought, and the capacity of thought have no existence between death and the last day. Now if this position and inference be true, the doctrine of Spectres is overthrown at once. Sure we may be that what never exists can never really appear, however I may be deluded by my own imagination, or the artifice of others. This position therefore, before we proceed, demands particular discussion.

If thought be the entire effect of material form, and excellent thought of excellent form, as these philosophers seem to suppose, it follows that the more excellent the body is the more excellent will be the mind. But facts shew the contrary. The goose, which sometimes appears in elegant human form, we despise; while we admire the fables of Æsop and the sublime verse of that poet, who was told what is the mark of interrogation. "But although the externals of body may be deformed, yet the internals of it may be well organized and refined." What says the anatomist respecting the ourang outang? "Not only the externals, but the internals of his body resemble those of man, particularly the tongue and the brain. There appears no difference between them;

yet the animal is dumb and has not so much sagacity even to provide for herself as the elephant or the beaver." However certain laws and dispensations of Divine Providence, accommodated to the rude apprehensions of mankind in early ages, punished the posterity of sinners; yet it is one of the first dictates of reason as well as of a better covenant, that justice does not require any person to be rewarded or punished for the virtues or vices of another. * If soul and body die together; if all intelligence and cogitation cease from that moment to the last day, what becomes of personal identity and accountability? The essence of personality is intelligence. Every intelligent being is a person, and every person an intelligent being.† Therefore the uninterrupted continuation of any particular intelligence, necessarily implies his personal identity; whatever body, or whatever garment he may, or may not, happen to wear. Therefore, premising deference, personal identity does not necessarily comprise the whole man, soul and body, as Dr. Watts supposes, nor is it the mere consciousness of my past and present experience compared, as Mr. Locke supposes; for this my very consciousness presupposes that existence of which I am conscious. I may have committed faults and performed virtuous actions in time past, which now I do not remember, and therefore not conscious of them; still those actions were mine, whether I am conscious of them or not, and so far as any one can prove them to be mine, so far he can prove me to be the same person that I was in the time when those actions were performed. For more instruction, the reader may consult that excellent dissertation of Bishop Butler, on this topic; from which I extract a few lines: "As upon two triangles being compared or viewed together, there arises to the mind the idea of similitude; or upon twice two and four, the idea of equality—so likewise upon comparing the consciousness of one's self in any two moments, there immediately arises to the mind the idea of personal identity. And as the two former comparisons not only give us the ideas of similitude and equality, but also shew us that two triangles are alike, and twice two and four are equal—so the latter comparison not only gives us the idea of personal identity, but also shows

* Christ laid down his life for his sheep; but mere law and justice never required this of him.

† Even the divine Trinity, existing from everlasting, to speak with accuracy, is the Trinity of Person, not of Persons.

us the identity of ourselves in those two moments, that is, the present and that immediately past; or the present and that of a month, a year, or twenty years past. Or in other words, by reflecting upon that which is myself now, and that which was myself twenty years ago, I discern they are not two, but one and the same self. But the consciousness of what is past, does thus ascertain our personal identity to ourselves, yet to say that it *makes* personal identity, is to say that a person has not existed a single moment, nor done one action but what he can remember, and none but what he reflects upon. And one should really think it self evident that consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot *constitute* personal identity, any more than knowledge in any other case can constitute the truth which it presupposes."

If this account of personal identity be just, then, by the doctrine here opposed, death puts an end to it. Affection, thought, intelligence, consciousness, all are no more, and therefore the person is no more. And as he is no more, nothing can be his. Now existence is entitled to no reward, deserves no punishment: is guilty of nothing and accountable for nothing. In a future day something may be raised up just like him in body and natural faculties of mind.' But for this something, creation, not resurrection, is the appropriate term. Now can we conceive that the person struck entirely out of existence a thousand years ago, and this person newly created in his likeness, should be one and the same? No, we can as well conceive that two small houses built a thousand miles apart, and entirely resembling each other, are one and the same house. These new persons, if they reason, as some of us do, will think it somewhat strange that they should be accountable for crimes said to have been committed by them long before they were created. This doctrine, however, affords comfort and encouragement to all distinction of sinners in this world. Our punishment in a future state, say they, will not be inflicted upon *us*, (for after death we shall exist no more) but upon our representatives who shall bear our names, and be made to think that they were we. Let us then eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Let us imitate those noble animals around us, which innocently deceive, kill and take possession; for to-morrow we shall exist no longer. What a foul reproach then does this doctrine exhibit against the wisdom and equity of the

righteous Governor of the world? We now attend to the language of scripture respecting this opinion. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus, is grounded on the hypothesis that some persons are happy or miserable in the separate state, while others are living in the present world. The text, "Absent from the body and present with the Lord," by the subtle philosophy of this enlightened age, signifies that after we, as persons, have been annihilated for some ages, a number of new persons, just then created, who shall be our very selves, will be present with the Lord. But in view of the simple christian, who knows but little, the plain meaning of the text is, that in the very same hour and minute, while we are absent from this corruptible body, we are present with the Lord. Such an ignorant christian is not able to conceive how a person, and a similar person residing on the two opposite shores of the vast duration of nihility, can be one and the same person, any more than to conceive how a person and a similar person, residing at the same time on the opposite shores of the vast Atlantic, can be one and the same person. Our Lord said to the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" that is, before the close of this natural day thou shalt be with me in heaven. So the penitent thief in his state of ignorance would naturally understand it. But Priestlian subtilty requires this paraphrase, "This day shalt thou die, soul and body, and remain personally annihilated about two thousand years." Then a person entirely new shall begin to exist, and shall erroneously imagine that within a few months he had committed a theft, that within a few hours he had been crucified, and obtained a promise which was now completely fulfilled. All this deception will take place, because he will be you. However, by intercourse with others, he and you will discover these chronological errors, and that those things which you had done, suffered and enjoyed, took place about two thousand years before you, that is, before the second you, existed. It was well for the thief that he knew not, and believed not, this paraphrase; otherwise that promise would have been a poor, cold consolation to him. The Sadducees denied the resurrection, and the existence of angel and spirit, and their denial of the former was grounded on their denial of the latter. They seemed to admit, that, if spirits existed in a separate state, they might assume bodies. But as there *were* no such spirits in their view, the inference was certain,

that no such transition could take place. Therefore the argument of our Saviour attacked the very foundation of their theory, by shewing that the patriarchs, though dead for many years, and their bodies not raised, were still alive, while Moses stood at the burning bush.* Our Lord cited these words, addressed to Moses at that time, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" and then says, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him." That is to say, they do not live unto man. In his natural view, they are dead in every respect. They see no life in his body, nor any where else; still they live unto God. In his view they have life, thought, affection and intelligence. Therefore those dead patriarchs were alive at the time when Moses beheld the burning bush. "Fear not them which kill the body, saith our Lord, but are not able to kill the soul." † But why? What is the reason they are not able to kill the soul? If soul and body die together—if death destroys the essential properties of the soul as well as of the body, certainly they, who are able to kill the body, are able to kill the soul. But the words now cited were uttered by him who could not err; and for the writer it is impossible to conceive how words could be framed to make a proposition more plain and intelligible. But in this age of light and darkness, many, who believe on immortality and the separate state, utterly deny that any departed soul ever returns or becomes visible to our bodily eyes. Of this persuasion are the authors of the American Cyclopaedia. Their arguments, which demand attention, are the following: The first argument contemplates the ignorance and vulgarity associated with the opinion which maintains the existence of Spectres. "It is true there were many christians in former times, who gave full credit to such narratives; these were times of great ignorance and superstition. But since philosophy and christianity have walked hand in hand, the faith of ghosts has been more and more renounced, invariably." So it seems that if a pious man has learning enough, he is perfectly secure from all such delusions. But is this representation entirely consonant with facts? That christ-

*It is the opinion, not only of Mr. Swedenbourg, but of many other pious and learned men, of other persuasions, that when the pious soul has left the body, he occupies a vehicle or spiritual body which may be considered as the resurrection commenced, and to be perfected in the last day, when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

† Matthew 10: 28.

ian literature has invariably renounced this opinion is by no means correct. Not only was the faith of Spectres supported by some of the most learned and eminent characters of antiquity, but moderns, illustrious both in theology and philosophy, even since the Protestant Reformation, have given their decided opinion in favor of this doctrine. Among others, are Doctor Lightfoot, Mr. Flavel, Mr. Hervy, Mr. Addison, Doctor Samuel Johnson, and the excellent Mr. Swedenbourg. Will it be proved that all these modern names are entirely ignorant either of theology or philosophy?

“What more frequent in times of popery than apparitions? Says President Mather, it would fill a volume to rehearse them; yet we may not run into the other extreme, that all such reports have no reality.” But what do philosophers know respecting this affair more than other people? What lesson in the whole circle of science has ever determined the question, whether sounds or forms were ever produced by unembodied spirits? What ancient Sadducee or modern materialist has ever yet proved that the human thoughts have not a separate existence by vehicle, or in some other way?

Had our authors told us that the belief of Spectres has been rejected invariably wherever philosophy and modern infidelity have gone hand in hand, the sentence would have been perfectly accurate. The christian world affords no infidel who would not ridicule the following letters.

We see an age of light and darkness—of improvement and misimprovement. Ignorance is supported, when we believe too much, or when we believe too little. And a wise mariner will stand aloof both from Scilly and Charybdis—from the prejudice of superstition and the prejudice of modernism.

The foundation of theology is the Sacred Scriptures, and there we find the doctrine of apparitions. Samuel appeared to Saul when he applied for advice to the witch of Endor.* There is however no proof that his appearance was the effect of her own power. Two things terrified her: one was the discovery of Saul; the other was, Aliem, a god, rising out of the earth. How could she be terrified merely by the expected effect of her own invention? It is most reasonable to suppose that the event exceeded her expectation—that Samuel really appeared—not to flatter Saul by a sentence of double meaning, like the heathen oracles; but to speak like himself—to reprove Saul for coming there, and to denounce

* 1 Samuel, xxviii, 15.

that terrible sentence upon him and his house, which might naturally be expected from that faithful prophet.

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, it is a spirit, and they cried out for fear : but his answer was, " Be of good cheer, it is I ; be not afraid." Here we see the disciples believed the existence of Spectres, and here was a fair opportunity for our Lord to teach them the contrary. But he did not thus improve it : for after his resurrection they discovered the same opinion. He asked one of them to handle him ; not to disprove their opinion, but to prove his resurrection. Some time after this, Peter, miraculously delivered from prison, knocked at the house of Mary, where many were gathered for prayer. The damsel Rhoda, constantly affirmed to them that she heard Peter's voice. Then said they, " It is his angel." Thus their opinion continued the same through the fairest opportunities of their being taught otherwise by unerring wisdom. But they had never read Voltaire, nor Hume's observation on the Sprights of the British Fathers.

ARG. 2. " When the Scriptures were written and published, and the christian religion fully established, revelation ceased, and miracles and heavenly messages were no longer requisite."

How do they know ? How *can* they know these matters, unless by the Scriptures ? And where do they say, that after the establishment of christianity, miracles and heavenly messages should be no longer requisite ? It is believed that no such passage can be found.

It was the full persuasion of Mr. Addison, that the power of working miracles continued in the church many years after the Apostolic age. He informs us that learned christians of those times, " Confidently assert this miraculous power ; nay, tell us that they themselves had been eye witnesses of it at several times and in several instances. Nay, appeal to the heathen themselves for the truth of several facts they relate ; nay, challenge them to be present at their assemblies, and satisfy themselves, if they doubt it : nay, we find that pagan authors have in some instances confessed this miraculous power." *

Doubtless the Scriptures contain rules sufficient for salvation. And every opposite rule, though preached by an angel, must be rejected ; and the same was true of the Old

Testament before the New was revealed. But it will by no means follow that no succeeding age of the world can afford an occasion for any miracle or heavenly message which is *consistent* with the Scriptures. That "the whole will of God is revealed in the Scriptures," as it respects our general conduct, is doubtless true; and the same was true of the law of Moses, as it respected the general conduct of Israel in the days of the Judges. He was pronounced cursed, who took away or added thereunto. But hence it did not follow that an angel could not appear to Manoah and his wife, promise them a child, and give directions concerning his education. To say that the whole will of God is so revealed in the Scriptures, that no case whatever can require any extraordinary exhibition of his will, is to say what is never said in that sacred volume, and is no better than begging the question.

There may be miracles and heavenly messages without innovation of Scripture doctrine or worship. "To say that God does not send his angels to any of his saints to communicate his mind unto them, as to some particulars of their own duty *according to his word*, seems in my judgment, says the great Doctor Owen, to limit unwarrantably the Holy One of Israel."

ARG. 3. "Can we suppose that the all-wise Governor of the world would permit his angels to render themselves visible to the eye of man, for a purpose which might have been equally well accomplished without their interposition?"

This question is very easy. Another might appear more difficult. Have our authors such perfect knowledge of the universal system, that they can certainly tell us what purposes can be equally well accomplished without the interposition of angels, as with it?

The hairs of the head and the smallest animalculæ are numbered; so are all events. Small events by connection are frequently great events. If therefore, the purposes for which a spirit is said to appear, are as small and trivial as can be conceived of, it would by no means follow that the message did not come from the invisible state. That which appears very trivial in our view, may appear vastly important in the view of those seven eyes which survey the whole system of Providence, and destroy the wisdom of the wise.

ARG. 4. "Death is as great a change as that of our birth. And is it not as improbable that a man should visibly return

after death, as that he should return from a state of manhood, to that which preceded his birth?" That is to say; Is it not as improbable that a species of miracle should take place, the existence of which has been taught and believed in all ages and nations, and is the manifest lesson of the Scriptures; as that a species of miracle should take place, which nobody ever believed or heard of?

Is it not as improbable that a man should rise from the dead at the last day, as that he should return from a state of manhood to that which preceded his birth.

This question of the infidel demands some attention, as well as the question in view.

ARG. 5. "There is a strong objection against the probability of Spectres, which is sufficient to prove that they are not intelligent creatures; or at least, that they possess so small a degree of intelligence, that they are unqualified to act with prudence, to propose any end to themselves, or use the proper means to accomplish that end. Ghosts often appear in order to discover some crime; but they never appear to a magistrate, or person in authority, but to some illiterate clown, who happens to live near the place where the crime was perpetrated: to some person who has no connection with the affair at all, and who, in general, is the most improper in the world for making the discovery.

In Glanville's *Saducismus Triumphatus*, we have the following story:—

"James Haddock, a farmer, was married to Eleanor Welsh, by whom he had a son. After the death of Haddock, his wife married one Davis, and both agreed to defraud the son by the former marriage, of a lease bequeathed to him by his father. Upon this the ghost of Haddock appeared to one Francis Tavernor, the servant of Lord Chichester, and desired him to go to Eleanor Welsh and inform her that it was the will of her former husband that the son should enjoy the lease. Tavernor did not at first execute this commission, but he was continually haunted by the apparition in the most hideous shapes, which even threatened to tear him in pieces, till at last he delivered the message. Now had this Spectre the least common sense, it would have appeared first to Eleanor Welsh and her husband, Davis, and frightened them into compliance at once, and not have kept poor Tavernor in such constant disquietude, who had no concern in the matter."

Here we find several propositions with regard to Spectres in general, which demand credit only for one short story, the truth of which might be as consistently disputed by the apparitionists, as by the Encyclopedia. It does not appear that this apparition was seen or heard by any one except Tavernor. What evidence then have we that Tavernor was not the dupe of one who personated Haddock out of pity to the orphan son?

Could our authors imagine that Mr. Addison, Doctor Johnson, or even Mr. Glanville himself, built the faith of Spectres, only on such feeble evidence as this story affords?

Will that mode of conduct adopted by Tavernor's Spectre, teach us what is the conduct of Spectres in general, till we, who believe the reality of Spectres, can be satisfied whether Tavernor ever saw a Spectre or not?

Circumstances unknown to us, however, might be so attached to that affair, as to render it credible to Davis and his wife, if not to others.

Therefore, admitting the supposition of our believing it a reality, how have our authors proved that this very Spectre conducted imprudently, proposed no end to himself, or used no proper means to accomplish that end? "Because, say they, he did not first appear to Eleanor Welsh and her husband, and frighten them into compliance at once." But how does it appear that this summary method, all things considered, would have been the most eligible. Doubtless some infidels are bold enough to say that the angel, who sent Moses to Pharaoh from Horeb, would have conducted much more prudently and rationally, if he had first appeared to Pharaoh, and frightened him into compliance at once, than to have kept Moses in such disquietude, who had less concern in the matter than any man in Egypt, for he was now married and peaceably settled in another land. The end proposed by the ghost appearing to Tavernor was, that the son of Haddock should enjoy the lease, and this end was subordinate and absolutely necessary to other ends of far greater magnitude, for any thing which the Cyclopaedia has shewn to the contrary.

We find in the Scriptures such a connection of means and ends as the wisdom of some moderns would never dictate: as that of Ezek. 4: 15, and the marriage of Hosea transacted, either in reality or in vision. These means, doubtless, would not have appeared the most decent and eligi-

ble to some of those who seem capable of dictating for apparitions, the proper mode of their procedure.

But suppose Tavernor's ghost had first appeared to Eleanor Welsh and her husband, and frightened them into compliance at once, would the existence of Spectres be any more believed than it is at present? Would not the objection have been that Eleanor Welsh had the maternal affection for her son? Had never really consented to the crime—that her own fear was feigned, and that the ghost was some friend employed by her to frighten and deceive her husband?

Or if the ghost had first appeared to a magistrate: should we not have been told how much more probable it was that a magistrate should bear a part in some artifice which afforded him profit, than that a miracle had happened equal to the transition from a state of manhood to that which preceded our birth? It is no dishonor to the most illustrious of mankind that they frequently entertain the same opinion as that of their inferiors. On the mode of conduct proper for a Spectre, our authors agree in sentiment with that Heroine of a famous English ballad,* who with the habiliments there described, frightened a person into compliance at once. She gave him no opportunity to deliberate or to authenticate her mission. Compliance, or immediate ruin were his only alternative. Her name was honored by three queens, and the favor of Henry the eighth.

Spectres from heaven are rational creatures, and come down from the fountain of reason, and will therefore deal reasonably with us, by allowing us a fair opportunity to ascertain the reality of their mission. But for this examination, the mind is incapable when terrified by a sudden surprise.

Eleanor Welsh being the mother of the injured, must have been interested, and therefore, if the Spectre had first appeared to her and her husband, there certainly would have been less evidence of reality (*coct. par*) than there was by its first appearing to Tavernor, who, by the very supposition of our author, was a disinterested person, and “had no concern in the matter.”

We find in the next place several naked assertions, and then the inference that, “The evidence of Spectres is destroyed. They tell us that Spectres appear only to one per

* Kate with a hide and horns.

son at a time—that they are seen only in the night, and visible only to the illiterate and credulous. “A man must be prejudiced in favor of this opinion beforehand, say they or he will never see a ghost.”

I must not offend the reader by needless detention. He may easily find instances to disprove these assertions. As to the last, besides Doctor Scott, several persons of distinguished abilities, probity and literature, who have seen ghosts, have declared to the writer, that instead of previously believing their existence, their minds had been strongly prejudiced against it.

Our authors desire to know why Spectres should appear in the night, and “why they could not deliver their messages with as much ease and more success in the day time.” And doubtless Bolingbroke had a similar enquiry respecting the angel who appeared to the shepherds in the night.

“To render the testimony of any person credible, say these writers, he must not only be a man of veracity, but of sufficient ability to judge of the subject to which he is to bear witness. It is not on the evidence of an ignorant, illiterate person, who has more fancy and fear than judgment, that we are to rest our belief of what is supernatural.” Here again their weapon is from the arsenal of those who oppose our Saviour’s resurrection, known first to some of “the timorous and pious sex,” as Hume has termed them, and then to illiterate, ignorant fishermen, who, say the deists, had more fancy and fear than judgment. The truth is, some ignorant men have no more fancy nor fear than the learned, and a much better judgment than many of the latter. The corporeal senses of the illiterate are as infallible as those of the learned. The former can see and hear a ghost or an angel as distinctly as the latter, and can attempt to handle a ghost with as much composure of mind, and so are capable of knowing whether they can feel a substance or not, as a Locke or a Newton.

On the whole, it appears that the reason why mankind in this enlightened age, must believe that apparitions are a mere fiction, is not because this negative thesis was ever established by any solid demonstration, but because the unanimity of modern names, the substitute of argument, has given it popularity.

Doubtless the counterfeit apparitions which duped the popish ages, where numerous; but counterfeits will never prove that there is nothing to be counterfeited.

Among the greatest impositions of this nature, where shall we find one, which will compare with the late events of Sullivan, in the county of Hancock, Maine. In that place has never been found any theatrical representation, or magic glass, or lantern, or ventriloquist, or speaking automaton, or Phantasmagoria, or Statue of Kircher: and were all these means of imposition found there, they would afford no rational explanation of the subsequent phenomena. How easy of solution was that fraud in the city of Bern, mentioned by Mosheim,* as imposed upon one Jetzer, by four Dominicans, to confirm their doctrine of original sin. The apparition was indeed terrific, and exhibited false miracles, but never offered to appear in the day time, nor predict any event, which could not be foreknown by other means, nor was there any address to the sense of feeling to satisfy Jetzer that the Spectre was a Phantom.

The Encyclopedia have related a wonderful artifice from Doctor Plot, performed undoubtedly by a number of persons at Woodstock, in England, soon after the death of king Charles the first, while certain commissioners appointed to survey his property there, were engaged to accomplish their business. But in all that marvelous story, we find no comparison with the events we are about to contemplate. The only apparition seen there, was that of a dog! none of them observed the manner of his being introduced among them. They saw no changes of shape or magnitude, nor does it appear that any of them saw him vanish. They heard no articulate voice, much less any declaration of truth, unattainable by other means.

As to the Cocklane ghost, which produced so much noise and credit in London; there was neither articulate voice, nor any kind of apparition. All these artifices, and a thousand more which history commemorates, are swallowed up by the subsequent phenomena, as Aaron's rod swallowed up the rods of the magicians.

Pause then, reader, and consider a few moments what evidence would convince you of the existence of a Spectre. Before you stands a creature encircled with radiance resembling the sun. Through the rays you behold a personal form as plainly as possible. This form speaks to you. The same is seen and heard by thirty others at the same time and in the same manner, so that your experience and

theirs are uniform ; while two or three other persons with the same ocular advantages, and looking in the same direction, hear the voice, but see nothing, having been previously told by the Spectre that they should only hear and not see.

With a voice distinct from that of the living, so that none of you can perceive the least manifestation of breathing, this personal form tells you not to be afraid—that nothing will hurt you—to stand as near as you please, and handle him that you may know whether or not he is flesh and bones. You comply with the request, and find no material substance. Now what would be your conclusion ? Would you feel sure that these matters were all the effect of your own fancy and that of others ? Can you produce a single instance out of all history, in which so many persons were thus impressed, while in reality they saw and heard nothing ? But suppose further, that this Spectre informs you of events which you cannot possibly know by other means, what then would be the inference ? “ I make a distinction, says Doctor Johnson, between what a man may experience by the mere strength of his imagination, and what imagination cannot possibly produce. Thus, suppose I should think I saw a form and heard a voice cry, “ Johnson, you are very wicked—and unless you repent, you will certainly be punished ;” my own unworthiness is so deeply impressed on my mind, that I might imagine I thus saw and heard, and therefore I should not believe that an external communication had been made to me. But if a form should appear and a voice should tell me that a particular man had died at a particular hour—a fact which I had no apprehension of, nor any means of knowing, and this fact, with all its circumstances, should afterwards be unquestionably proved ; I should in that case be persuaded that I had supernatural intelligence imparted to me.” By this it appears, that had Doctor Johnson been an eye and ear witness of only a small part of what is now to be related, he would have believed that he had seen the form and heard the language of a Spectre. “ He had a very philosophical mind, says Mr. Boswell, and such a rational respect for testimony, as to make him submit his understanding to what was authentically proved, though he could not comprehend why it was so.”* And the same will be the disposition of every pious and reasonable mind. But if you reject the evidence of experience, the evidence of substantial testimony and the

* Life of Dr. Johnson, pp. 364.

evidence of predictions, where are you? On the billows of scepticism, without a helm, and your lee shore is infidelity.

It is frequently asserted, and that by multitudes, that the true origin of the following letters is a gross artifice. ASSERTED I say: for that is all. Twenty-six years' time they have had to look round, search and prove that they are not mistaken. And for this purpose, means and pains have not been wanting. Nothing however has yet transpired to make good the assertion; but remarkable events have disproved it.

It is well known that some of the witnesses have been prosecuted for mountebanks; but nothing even to form an indictment could be found against them. Do I misrepresent? Do I mislead the credulous? Then let me be convinced? yea, let me be exposed. Let the cause be fully and fairly tried by friendly discussion; not in a future century, when we shall dwell in silence, but now, while the means of evidence are at hand—while the witnesses and their opponents are yet living.

If we love our neighbors, we prize their characters, and forbear needless censure, especially in a case like this. "Judge not that ye be not judged."

For our conclusion, the words of the celebrated Mr. Addison and of Mr. Hartly are not impertinent: "I think a person who is terrified with the imagination of ghosts and Spectres, much more reasonable than one, who, contrary to the report of all historians, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the appearance of Spirits fabulous and groundless. Could not I give myself up to this general testimony, I should to the relations of particular persons, who are now living, and whom I could not distrust in other matters of fact."* "Certain it is, says Mr. Hartly, that Spirits can become visible and converse with us, as man with man; and so innumerable are the instances hereof, as also of their discoveries, warnings, predictions, &c., that I may venture to affirm with an appeal to the public for the truth of it, that there are few ancient families in any county of Great Britain, who are not possessed of records or traditions of the same in their own houses, however the prevailing Sadducism of these times, may have sunk the credit of them."—*Preface to Swedenborg's treatise of heaven and hell*, p. 18.

* Spectator, No. 110.

His whole discussion of this topic demands our peculiar attention.

As the glorious descent of New Jerusalem is at hand, and perhaps already begun, it is not improbable that henceforth these phenomena will exceedingly multiply, and then destroy the wisdom of the wise. New Jerusalem will descend, i. e. the saints will descend from heaven and make visible their spiritual bodies. While those heavenly doctrines are inculcated, which establish a church new and glorious; so that the old christian church has no glory by reason of the glory which excelleth. Then Universalism, Socinianism, Arianism, and the grossly absurd doctrine of Divine tri-personality will deceive the nations no more for a thousand years.*

SECTION II.

Recent proofs of the doctrine by the existence of a particular Apparition.—IN SIX LETTERS.

LETTER I.

In reply to a friend, who had expressed his desire and that of others, that the account of the Spectre might not be made public.

My Dear Sir:—In our last interview, you favored me with the suspense of your judgment with regard to the Spectre, which has produced so much altercation in this part of the land.

I am therefore encouraged to ask your further attention to this affair, contemptible as it must appear, if you believe but a part of the misrepresentation now propagated. These, with modern incredulity, now form the general opinion of

* Since the Deity has assumed our nature, his being comprises Divine intelligence and human intelligence. The former is intuitive; the latter reasons sometimes for the investigation of truth; yet being in a sense made Divine, is the infallible source and medium of all our spiritual knowledge, grace and happiness. Now as intelligence is the very essence of personality, distinction of intelligence must be the distinction of personality. Therefore the Divine Intelligence is the Divine Person, and the human intelligence, is the human person. The Divine breathing, too, called the Holy Ghost, is a person in the figurative sense; several personal pronouns being applied to this Divine afflatus in the Scriptures. Our meaning thus explained, we may truly say that there are three Persons in the Deity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all comprised in our glorious Saviour, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Deity bodily. But the doctrine of there being literally three distinct personal divinities in the Deity, has no foundation in the Scriptures.

the wise and unwise, the learned and unlearned, that this whole affair is mischief and artifice, practised by one or more of Mr. B's family, and particularly by the young woman, whose marriage was responsive to the prediction and direction of the Spectre. Thus stands the vision of Hosea in the view of our Deists. They consider it a thousand times more probable that the good man was some how or other deceived by those licentious women, than that he ever received such direction from the invisible world. Now while my own opinion is entirely the reverse—while I view that family and their neighbors who vindicate them as unjustly censured; shall I appear the sang froid spectator? Perish rather my own reputation with theirs.

But this notwithstanding, dear sir, you will not fail to mention the ardent sensations of gratitude and esteem which I entertain for those pious and judicious persons, who have expressed their generous anxiety for my character and usefulness.

It is not so much the matter or style of the pious discourse of the Spectre which demands our attention, as the enquiry whether there was any Spectre or not. She taught the same truth which we find in our Bible. She proclaimed no new doctrine. Had she done this, it would have occasioned a great objection against her.* She exhorted the young people to read the Bible as their sure guide to eternal life. And her requirements were defended by the Scriptures whenever the propriety of any of them was doubted, to shew that her directions agreed with the law and the testimony.

In the style of her discourse, there was nothing of elegance or sublimity, more or less than we observe among common people in that pious and familiar conversation in which passages of Scripture are frequently introduced.

This, they say, is a great objection: a person from the invisible state would never have conversed with the people in such an ordinary style. But had she excelled in the *elegant* or *sublime*, objection would not have been silent. It would have been said that she was not the person she professed to be: for the employment of that person had never been the study of Sheridan or Longinus: on earth she was below it, in heaven above it. The Spectre came not with the excellency of speech, which man teaches, nor with the sublimi-

* The personal pronouns *she* and *her* are here used with reference to the sex to which the ghost belonged in this world.

ty of those prophecies which describe the rise and ruin of empires; for empires were not her subject; and there was perfect propriety in her using such language as would subserve two of her designs: which were to manifest who she was, and to render herself as familiar as possible to those common people with whom she conversed. Accordingly her mention of certain articles of property which she had left, was by no means an ultimate design, as she herself declared; but this, and her reasonable disposal of them, were more clearly to convince her family that she had been their daughter and sister. For the same reason the features of her face were observed to be like those of the person she professed to be, by some who knew her in her life time. And though her voice had no indication of breath and was inimitably distinct from any voice of the living, yet it had the same sound which she had uttered in her last hours, as they, who attended her in her last sickness have testified. Sometimes a part of the company could understand her words without the least difficulty; while others with advantages of hearing, every way equal, perceived only a sound, without the least articulation whatever. Thus the men who were with Paul at the time of his conversion, heard a voice, but saw no man, and they saw the light, but heard not the articulate voice of the speaker.

Such was the various experience of the people on these occasions. Some of them heard and understood plainly, but saw nothing: others heard a voice, but no speaking voice: others again saw a light, but no person: while they had no impediments natural or accidental; yet far the greater number heard the words distinctly, and clearly saw a personal form. And the very same persons, who could not see, nor hear intelligibly at one time, would at another time, and even at a greater distance see, hear and understand without the least difficulty: while others of the company, who had clearly seen and understood at the previous interview, could now only see a light and hear a sound.

It was to render herself familiar that she frequently introduced herself, as we do, by the token of knocking.

When Peter knocked at the house of Mary, the disciples thought it was his angel, that is to say, they thought that a Spirit might come to the house and knock. They more easily believed that a Spirit was at the door, than that Peter had escaped from prison. We should in this age more easily believe the contrary. But the disciples were no philosophers.

For the same reason she endeavored to dispel the fears of those who conversed with her. "Do not be afraid, she would say, I have not come to hurt you. You need not be afraid at all." Utterly opposite, you observe, to the conduct of those who personate apparitions. They generally aim to keep their dupes in fear and at a convenient distance.

So the angel addressed the shepherds, "Fear not." "I do not stand too near you, do I?" said a person unsuspected. "No," was the reply, "stand as near as you please."

Hence also the reason why she did not commonly begin to speak, till she was addressed. I say, *commonly*, for there were some exceptions. The voice of a Ghost responsive, is not so unexpected, and, of course, not so suddenly terrific as the same voice would be without previous address. This may serve to remove that objection of the Encyclopedia: "It is an odd circumstance, say they, that ghosts have no power to speak till they are addressed." But this odd circumstance is not occasioned by their want of power; but by their tenderness for the persons who receive their messages. This was the very reason she once expressly gave for not speaking where she once appeared. Hence we may, if we choose, see one reason why she spoke so frequently in the cellar. It is easy to see, if we choose, that the idea of a Spectre coming into the room where the family commonly resided for labor, sleep, or other refreshment was distressing to them: for this was their refuge, their place of retreat. Accordingly when, upon a certain day, she appeared among them in one of the lower rooms, they all left the house. The Spectre, therefore, out of tenderness to them, *commonly*, though not always, conversed in the cellar, that they might seem to have a place of retreat. The next question is, why then did she not commonly speak in one of the chambers or in the open field? But the chambers were the apartments of repose, and the field was inconvenient by the weather. She did however, sometimes speak in the chambers, and in the lower rooms, and in other houses of the neighborhood, and several times in the open field.

A cellar, such as that was, is a place where deceivers, imitating her realities would find difficulty. A ventriloquist might indeed speak there. But how? Not so that a part of the company shall hear and understand distinctly, while the other part with advantages of hearing every way equal, and giving equal attention, shall not understand a single word.

If a ventriloquist could perform this, we should have known it before this time.

No white garments can appear white in a dark cellar at midnight, and suppose any lucid substance could have been used, then, when it first appeared a mere shapeless mass, who formed it in a moment into personal shape, face and features? Who caused it to speak and desired to be handled? and when this desire was complied with, why did not the hand undeceive the eyes? Now admit the possibility of a magic lantern, where did it move, and where stood the upright plane for the representation, when by the order of the Spectre, the company of about twenty persons formed an Ellipsis within which she passed and re-passed from end to end several times. You must inform me too how some eyes saw the form so clearly, while others with advantages of sight every way equal, saw nothing.

However, it is not even pretended that any such mediums of delusion were ever seen here.

For an argument which vindicates this conduct of the Spectre still more, I am indebted to Professor Stewart. "It appears to me to be no slight confirmation of these remarks,* says he, that, although in the dark, the illusions of imagination are much more liable to be mistaken for realities, than when their momentary effects on the belief are continually checked and corrected by the objects which the light of day presents to our perception; yet even total darkness is not so alarming to a person impressed with vulgar stories of apparitions, as a faint and doubtful twilight, which affords to the conceptions an opportunity of fixing and prolonging their existence by attaching themselves to something which is obscurely exhibited to the sight." Hence it follows, that in a dark cellar at midnight, a person was not so much exposed to deception, either by his own imagination, or by the artifice of others, as if there had been some degree of light. Had the ghost been wholly confined to a cellar, kitchen, or garret, or even to all these, the objection would appear more plausible; but this was by no means the case.

Accompanied by two persons she walked, or rather moved in elevation from the ground, nearly two miles, discoursing with them as they went along. "For what purpose?" you ask. Doubtless an important one. But to what purpose could I tell you; while you reject the possibility of it for any purpose.

* i. e. On the distinction between the original and required perceptions of sight.

This little journey was soon published through the town, but was no more believed than this luminous age now believes the writer. What was the consequence? "Go," said the Spectre, "to one of those two persons, collect all those in the neighborhood, who give the best evidence of piety and veracity. Let them hear and see: for they will tell the truth." He complied, and fifty people were convened at the time and place appointed for the interview.

After conversing with them several hours on the most serious topics, by which they were exceedingly affected and delighted, she reminded them of their credulity, and informed them that if they would walk on two and two in the solemn order observed at a funeral, she would walk with them, accompanied by one of those persons, who had accompanied her before, for evidence that they might have declared the truth. The company complied, and walked with her about half a mile in the manner now described.

But after all, I hear you inquire, "*admitting that the whole affair is genuine and free from illusion, how can the belief of it become beneficial to me and others?*"

But certainly truth is better than error. And do we know that this truth will never be wanted hereafter, for purposes which do not at present appear? Do you know how soon your own or other families may suffer unjust reproach, like the family and vicinity who are now so liberally censured? Do we know the length and weight of the chain of which this link is a part?

The Scriptures teach the doctrine of the separate state, and oppose materialism. What then? Is the evidence of Scripture injured by other evidence declaring the same truth and urging the study of the Scriptures, as our sure guide to eternal life? The ancient medals and other monuments of antiquity, which afford so much rational entertainment for the curious, never diminish in their eyes the evidence of value of the Roman, Grecian or Egyptian History. Why then should this medal before us, diminish in our eyes the value of the Scriptures? What distinction of men are they, who stand most secure from the peril of illusion by the superstitious belief of Spectres? Speak ye illuminees! ye Paines who keep no Bible!

With unvaried sentiments of esteem,

I continue yours.

LETTER II.

The circumstances of the marriage related in vindication of Mrs. Butler and others.

*Dear Sir :—*To compare great things with small, the unbelieving Jews, who heard and saw the first christian miracles to be really such, viewing them as the effects of magic or some other secret influence of satan ; but modern infidels say they were no miracles at all : so the opponents of the Spectre in this place, who have heard and seen, generally allow that the performances of the ghost were miraculous, but accomplished by evil agency ; while distant opponents pronounce the whole an artifice.

Thus distance of place has occasioned the same variations among the opponents of the Spectre, as distance of time among the opposers of christianity. By this comparison you must not imagine that I have reference to criminality ; but my design is to show that the friends and foes of the Spectre in this place are both opposed by those distant people who pronounce the whole an artifice. It is a mixture of supernatural agency and artifice in the view of the opponents here : not because the least motion of the latter was ever really discovered ; but because they judge, (and feel capable of judging) that no case of marriage in any age of the world, since the finis of the Scriptures, can possibly require the interposition of an heavenly messenger.

We, on the contrary, are so poorly qualified to determine how the world ought to be governed, that we know not what events should take place by ordinary means, or what by extraordinary means ; and therefore we know not but there might be such a circumstance in some place or period of the world.

We are too as much at a loss to account for the advent of an evil angel singing alleluias, in order to join a couple mutually attached in a relation which is honorable in all ; as to account for the advent of an holy angel for the same purpose.

It is necessary without all doubt, that such an extraordinary dispensation should be connected with an important consequence and a special reason why it took place. But it is not necessary that this consequence and reason should at present be universally known, though they certainly will be known hereafter, and probably in part to many in this world. The performances of the ghost are so connected with other

events of Providence, as to form a connected whole, the beauty of which cannot be known even in part without much examination.

The Spectre had a number of extraordinary messages, of which the marriage was but one, and that a subordinate one; and accordingly did produce extraordinary credentials.

The very first notices of any thing unaccountable were given at the time when Mrs. Butler, the supposed authoress of the whole delusion, was at the point of death, by a disease which soon became external and proved its reality. Was that the time for her, to commence the enterprise for a husband, when she must have been under the greatest disadvantage for the prosecution of it, and when there was no rational expectation that she would ever need a husband?

About twenty-four hours after her marriage, the Spectre foretold that she would become the parent of one child and then die. For what purpose *could* she, or any person for her, contrive this prediction and its fulfilment. Her walk of two miles in company with the Spectre and her father, was undertaken with great reluctance, if anything could be known by the correspondence of words and behaviour. But the small voice of one who had made the house tremble, informed them by message, that lives were in danger, if they refused. By the same voice the Scripture was quoted to shew that her direction was not inconsistent with it. What could have been done in this case more than was done by the most pious or prudent on earth? The Scriptures were consulted. The family prayed together, that, if there was deception in this extraordinary injunction, the Lord would make it known to them, and that, if the cause was of God, they might be preserved: for the storm, the evening, and especially the weakness of the ice, had rendered the way difficult and very perilous. When to these considerations we add the greivous offence and explicit repulse, which the whole family had that day received from the person to whom her father was, out of her hearing, to communicate the message, we cannot admit the idea of artifice in Mrs. Butler, without detaching from her all fear of danger—all sense of resentment—all respect due from a child to the parent—all rationality of conduct, and all consistency of character.

But further, the greatest and most conspicuous of these miracles appeared after the marriage. Could she, would she, or any person for her, perform these impossibles to ob-

tain a purpose which was obtained already? But admitting the plea for a minute, and but a minute, that they were possibles intended to establish the farce and multiply dupes for the preservation of character; a question then urges incessantly: *For what purpose was the child dug up and buried in another grave?* This was not a mere accident, but a deliberate and public transaction, appropriated by no *pretence* of any reason, but the mere order of the Spectre. Eighty people from four different towns were assembled and offered prayer to the Supreme Being on this occasion, and all by the direction of the ghost, declaring that the child would rise at her right hand at the last day. This was horrid wickedness in the ghost, if she was only such by profession. And our opponents must for their own sakes, allow that she possessed a great degree of subtilty, if not of wisdom: since for twenty six years past, they have for the most part scarcely ventured to conjecture, much less to prove who she was; though by their own acknowledgment she has talked among twenty of them, from time to time, within a foot of their faces.

Doubtless then some special design was concealed in this rare transaction. What was it? The continuation and extension of the fraud? No: for she must have known that the least of those miracles already exhibited, would better answer this purpose, were it now presented only before a small part of these eighty people. But the reinterment was not connected with even the pretence of miracle. What was the consequent impression on the minds of mankind? Just what any person with half an eye would easily foresee. It was such as rendered Mrs. Butler's character in the eye of mankind, neither better nor worse. What could she think to gain or lose in character or anything else, whether that other woman's child rested in its first grave, or in another about thirty feet from it? The whole affair was considered by mankind in general, as a solemn, mysterious parade, without any apparent consequence of injury or utility.

But this practical oath, as already shewn, was not without design: what was it? Was it to convince the assembly *at that time*, that Mr. Blaisdel and Capt. Butler, who acted the most distinguished and solemn part in it; believed the Spectre and her performance to be realities? No: for this they were completely convinced already. The question therefore with our opponents stands unresolved. When we consider

too the inimitable sound of the voice, most nearly resembling the dying voice of Capt. Butler's first wife, at certain times: And how often the ghost has appeared since Mrs. Butler's death, all suspicion of artifice must be utterly groundless, and cannot be indulged by those who love their neighbors as themselves, and exercise that constant tenderness for their characters which the gospel requires.

It has been objected against the Spectre, that in obtaining parental approbation the mothers were not sufficiently respected. But as the husband and wife are one, the message to the father was virtually sent to the mother. It was necessary in this case that three families should be consulted by the Spirit; that which had been her own family and those of the parties.

But with whom began this consultation? Not with Eve, like that of the devil. She did not, like a deceiver, first frighten and convince the timorous sex that they might assist her, either to delude or afflict their husbands. No, her conduct was fair and above-board. Her first application was to the fathers of these families: What was it? Certainly not that which is recommended by the Encyclopedia and the ballad poem; but that of deliberation. She at first neither appeared nor spake to them immediately to frighten them into compliance at once; but as she had dealt with the son,* so she dealt with the fathers. She sent messages to them.

By this fair mode of conduct, they had opportunity to reflect, to exercise reason—to consult one another, and to watch and pray against deception. Her first message sent only to the two fathers of this couple, contained that passage in Mark 10: 2 to 9, by which they might learn that, as the condition of ancient Israel at a certain time, required a precept with respect to marriage, somewhat distinct from the common law, which had existed from the beginning: so now the condition of this little branch of society might, for aught they knew, require a precept with respect to marriage, somewhat distinct from the common regulation, which had obtained from the beginning, though not contrary to it: even as a by-law may be consistent with the public code.

Such, she declared, was the precept now revealed for the particular regulation of those families, and her proofs to be produced, were her miracles. A strange, unexpected, un-

* To him she had before sent several messages by several persons of different families.

heard of message indeed! But not more strange, unexpected, or unheard of, than the credentials. By this precept she declared the parties must and would be joined. "And what God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

The father of the young lady, who had ever been most obstinately opposed to this connection, by whose means it had been once interrupted already, and who was no less capable than the other of discovering imposition, and ever watchful against it; was the first who obtained conviction. Him the Spectre sent to the other father (Mr. Butler) and his son to declare this conviction, and that the latter must conduct accordingly. The response was repulse, and he returned.

By the same extraordinary counsel, after praying and reading for light, he went again, and his daughter with him, crying and wringing her hands. After they had proceeded a small distance, they were accompanied by the Spectre the rest of the way, whose delightful voice uttering expressions full of love and tenderness, consoled the daughter as they went along.* This prepared her for acquiescence when coming to the house of the Spectre, as decency required, directed; that, while the daughter should tarry with her abroad, the father should go in and tell Mr. Butler's family that the Spectre had come with them, and that, if they chose a miracle for further confirmation, it should be granted.

After Mr. Butler had performed this, they invited the daughter to come in, and the question of suspicion being proposed, she solemnly protested, that if there was mischief in hand, she was as ignorant of it as they were.†

Here we see what abundant opportunity was given them to deliberate and consider for themselves in what way they would choose to be convinced: whether by miracle or common providence.

Message, protestation and miracle being rejected, Mr. Blaisdel and his daughter returned without delay, but had no

*I hear your objection. "There was a reason for her being consoled. Make me believe, if you can, that, if her professed ignorance of the affair was real; the appearance and discourse of a ghost by her side, would not augment her fears and distress." But remember, dear sir, that experience in this case is the best teacher. More than thirty witnesses of both sexes, are against you; all declaring that though at first the ghost excited terror; yet, after a little discourse with her, their fears were entirely dissipated, and succeeded by peculiar pleasure: so familiar and delightful was the mode of her address and conversation. At this time Mr. Blaisdel heard the conversation distinctly, but saw nothing. His daughter both saw and heard.

† This was ordered by the ghost.

sooner reached home than a new order from the Spectre, consistent with Scripture, required that Mr. Hooper, who had been her father, and who lived about six miles off, should be conducted here the next morning.

We now return to Mr. Butler's family; not to see miracles, but their confirmation by the voice of common Providence.

After Mr. Blaisdel and his daughter had left them, his conduct was naturally the subject of their discussion; and the more they reasoned, the more unaccountable it appeared. His notorious and inflexible opposition to this connection, which had continued several years, rendered him the most unlikely person in the world to pass a river, now the brink of death, for such a purpose. Their result was the necessity of further advice, and they unanimously chose Mr. Hooper, the young gentleman's father in law, as the person best qualified to give it. Accordingly the son, Capt. Butler, went the next morning to consult with him on this affair; but to his great surprise found himself intercepted by messengers sent by the ghost for the same purpose, who had just finished their business with success. Capt. Butler asked what he should do. "The case is such," said Mr. Hooper, "that I can have no advice to give."

Mr. Hooper, according to his promise, went off with the messengers; discoursed with the Spectre, and by the tokens which she gave him, identified his daughter.

After the deliberation of several days, he, by the desire of the Spectre, went to Mr. Butler's family, declared his conviction, and closed the message by solemn exhortation. Thus was the very man, whose advice they had preferred to a miracle, qualified by the Spectre to give it.

But to recede: Mr. Hooper's interview with the Spirit at Mr. Blaisdel's house was immediately succeeded by the arrival of Capt. Butler there. He soon acquired evidence that the Spirit was that of his deceased wife, and declared that her will was his.

But now to what purpose was all this labor and all these messages? For Miss Blaisdel was then asked if the same was her will? The reply was categorical and indignant; the purport of which was, that if she must die for her refusal, she desired to submit—that servile attentions, however miraculous the compulsion, would afford no satisfaction to her—that her trials were already intolerable by those false and wicked calumnies, which her compliance would now invigor

ate and render her life more bitter than death. That her attachment to his person was peculiar, she did not deny; but his credulous attention to these calumnies had rendered his society a burden.* At length, however, Capt. Butler's unreserved and honorable confession, and his renewed assurances that his *own* will was his, as well as that of his deceased wife, did, with the words of the Spectre prevail.

The design of marriage was made public, and round her increased the storm of accusation abroad, and opposition at home. For, though her father had constant and unwavering conviction that the precept was from heaven, it was only at certain intervals that he enjoyed the least degree of reconciliation; and it must not be concealed that Capt. Butler received very ill treatment from him.

Worn out by unjust reproaches abroad and these vexations at home, she at last told Capt. Butler, offering him a golden token of her constant affection, that she could bear these miseries no longer, and that they must separate. He pleaded the impropriety of her conduct after such evidence that the appointment was divine. His plea was the waste of words. She dismissed him utterly and forever. This I had by the favor of Capt Butler himself. Here Mr. Blaisdel, Mr. Butler, their families, their friends and every body else had another fair opportunity allowed them by Miss Blaisdel herself, to search, examine, reflect, deliberate and investigate the deception, if there was any.

A vessel was now in the river, bound to a port about two hundred miles from this place, where lived some of her near kindred. Thither she was determined to go, and made preparation for the voyage, that if possible she might find repose on some distant shore. But the miraculous voice solemnly warned her in the hearing of several witnesses, that her efforts were vain, and that her affliction would sail with her.

By the direction of the Spectre given to one of those witnesses, the dismissed was recalled. Not long after, the nuptials were celebrated: and thus the Spectre obtained one of those ends, which were only subordinate to other ends of far superior magnitude and importance.

These superior ends you will know hereafter; but they cannot—they must not be written.

I remain yours, &c.

*That all these reasons were assigned at *that juncture*, I pretend not to say. Probably they were not; but certain it is, that she expressed them all to her friends at different times.

LETTER III.

Further evidence deduced from the appearances of the Spectre.

My Dear Sir:—In compliance with your request, I proceed in the argument that some persons among us have seen and conversed with the dead. Of the five corporeal senses, only three are capable of information by events of this nature. These are seeing, feeling and hearing. To all these three senses, evidence has been addressed in favor of the Apparition in this place. I would now contemplate the evidence obtained by the senses of seeing and feeling.

The times, places and modes of her appearing were various. Sometimes she appeared to be alone, as the events which followed bore witness: for the testimony of events is sometime more valid than that of persons. Sometimes she appeared to two or three; then to five or six; then to ten or twelve; again to twenty, and once to more than forty witnesses. She appeared in several apartments of Mr. Blaisdel's house, and several times in the cellar. She also appeared at other houses, and several times in the open field, as already observed. There, white as the light, she moved like a cloud above the ground in personal form and magnitude, in the presence of more than forty people. She tarried with them till after day-light, and vanished: not because she was afraid of the sun: for she had then several times appeared when the sun was shining. Once in particular, when she appeared in the room where the family were, about eleven o'clock in the day, they all left the house; but convinced of the impropriety of their conduct they returned.

At another time, when several neighbors where at the house, and were conversing on these remarkable events, a young lady in the company declared that though she had heard the discourse of the Spectre, she would never believe that there had been a Spectre among us, unless she could see her.

In a few minutes after, the Spectre appeared to several persons and said she must come in the room where the company was. One of those who saw her, pleaded that she would not. The Spectre then asked, "Is there a person here, who desires to see me." The young lady was then called, who, with several others saw the Spectre.

"Here I am, said she, satisfy yourselves." The lady owned she was satisfied. It was now about two o'clock in the day. In short the ghost appeared or conversed, or performed both almost as frequently in the day, as in the night.

But will christians argue that the appearance of an angel to the Shepherds was a fiction because it happened in the night.*

* Voltaire, in his philosophical dictionary, treating the Bible and ghosts with equal ridicule, says that the latter, "used to hie away at the crowing of the cock." The same was the idea of Shakespeare in his ghost of Hamlet, "Adieu, the glow worm shews the morning to be near." But this we now see, is not always the case.

In all the appearances of the Spectre she was as white as the light, and this whiteness was as clear and visible in a dark cellar and dark night, as when she appeared in the open field and in the open day. At a certain time, August 9—10, 1799, she informed a number of people that she meant to appear before them, (for she frequently conversed without appearing at all) that they must stand in order and behave in a solemn manner: "For the Lord," said she, "is a God of order." Accordingly she appeared and vanished before them several times. At first they saw a small body of light, which continually increased till it formed into the shape and magnitude of a person.

This personal shape approached so near to Capt. Butler, that he put his hand upon it and it passed down through the apparition as through a body of light, in the view of six or seven witnesses. There were now thirteen persons present, who all saw the apparition except two.* And five others, whether they were looking another way, or were prevented by some standing before them, or whatever might be the cause, did not see this attempt of handling the apparition.

But I attend to your reasoning. "If this extraordinary fact be true, what a pity it is that there were no more witnesses! would not the evidence have been greater had it been acquired by all the eleven." The more extraordinary the fact, the more numerous should be the witnesses. This is the opinion naturally entertained by mankind every where. Hence it follows that *all* of those eleven persons were not then practising artifice: for then they would all have seen this extraordinary fact.

The five who did not see it, saw that which was very little short of it. They saw that which rose into personal form, face and features in a moment. Returned to a shapeless mass in a moment, resumed the person in a moment, and vanished again in a moment. They saw that which was not *afraid* to be handled by them: For she passed slowly by them near enough for that purpose.

The transfiguration of Christ was a very extraordinary fact. Out of all his twelve disciples, why chose he only three to be eyewitnesses of it?

As to the six witnesses, not one of them has ever been accused or even suspected of being concerned in the supposed artifice. Some of them are aged, others young. They had, and still have, professions, employments and interests widely different and belong to four different families. It is the fixed and settled opinion of our opponents here, that two of them are not only persons of integrity, but were ensnared by others through the whole scene.

These two persons soon after confirmed what they had now seen and experienced by a solemn, practical and most deliberate oaths in the presence of eighty people. For one of them made a prayer at

*These two, by their own desire, had obtained a promise that they should not see her. There were several such instances at different times.

the reinterment, expressing his belief of what he had seen, and the other solemnly declared to all the assembly, as soon as the prayer was finished, that this solemnity was ordered by the Spectre, to be observed by his means. He also confirmed the same by an express verbal oath before the civil magistrate.

LETTER IV.

Evidence produced by the discourse of the Spectre.

Dear Sir:—I would now present to your consideration the conversation of the Spectre. But I shall first observe the objection urged against some part of it.

At the time when she appeared to several persons at two o'clock in the day, she said, she must come into the room, where the company were; but was prevented by earnest entreaty. This, they say was a falsehood.

At another time when she walked in company with forty people, she went with them only to one house, though she had informed them that she must go to two houses. She indeed went forward in order to visit the other house, but was again prevented by earnest entreaty. This was a fault like the other.

Observe a similar case in Gen. 19: 2, 3. "And he said, behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night and wash your feet; and ye shall rise up early and go on your ways: and they said, *nay, but we will abide in the street all night.* But he pressed upon them greatly, and *they turned in unto him and entered into his house.*"

Several credible persons say, "she promised nearly fifty people to convince them of her being such as she professed to be, if they would comply with a certain condition. They complied, and went off unconvinced." But credible persons are sometimes mistaken, and so, perhaps, they were now: because other persons, as credible and as numerous, who stood nearer to and had better advantage of understanding the voice, declare that it was not the Spectre, but Mr. Blaisdel, who said that the company, by complying, would be convinced. But he was mistaken. They went off, in general, unconvinced at that time. The Spectre uttered but few words and withdrew. This was the night of August 9, 1799. In that company were the best of people, conducting in a sober manner; but others uttered such profanity and derision as rendered them unworthy to obtain conviction. On this account the Spirit afterwards declared that she could not manifest herself among them. Christ himself, in a certain place, could not do many mighty works because of their unbelief. It is early enough to treat any affair with derision when we have fully discovered what it is.

A scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not.

This company in general went off with the full persuasion that the whole affair was mere legerdemain, and that the few words of the Spectre, which they had heard, were only the words of Mrs. Butler herself. Though they had been expressly told by an unsuspected person, who held her by the hand when the words were uttered, that she did not speak—that the voice was at a distance from her. But they were moderns, and the witness was rejected; and, as it was plainly a different voice from that of Mrs. Butler, or any other that ever they had heard, necessity, the mother of invention, produced their hypothesis that Mrs. Butler had used some sounding instrument.

But several of the company still remained at the house. To them Mrs. Butler complained of the unjust reproach which encompassed her. "What have I done," said she, "that I must suffer all this." "Nothing, dear, you have done nothing," answered a voice immediately in the vacant space of the room. Then about fourteen persons, by the direction of the Spectre, went into the cellar. As soon as they were there, the Spectre said to Mrs. Butler, "Go up and sit with others on the kitchen hearth,* that this company may know that it is not you who speaks." After she was gone up the ghost conversed with the company on several topics, suited to authenticate her mission.

She mentioned several incidents of her past life, known only to her husband, as he declared, and asked him if he remembered them. He said, yes: she asked him if he had told them. He answered, no: and of such a nature were those incidents as to render it utterly improbable that he ever should have mentioned them before. This was at the time when he attempted to handle the apparition.

It is objected against her, that she told who was in heaven and who was in hell.

She indeed mentioned the world of misery, as the eternal portion of the finally impenitent; but I find not the least evidence of her particularizing any person, or persons as being in that miserable state.

She indeed mentioned several deceased persons as being in a state of happiness: and who can prove the impropriety of this? though indeed it is not what we should have expected.

Once when she conversed with about fourteen persons, Mr. Blaisdel having heard that his father was sick, asked the

* A place in the house most distant from that of the Spectre.

Spectre whether she knew any thing or not, concerning him? "Your father," she replied, "is in heaven, praising God with the angels." He afterwards found that his father, two hundred miles distant, died seven days before this answer of the ghost. True, the news might come from thence in that interval. But his friends at York, where his father lived, utterly deny that they sent the news in the course of these days. Suppose however, the news did some way or other come: could any deceiver, improving the circumstance, know what questions Mr. Blaisdel would ask, so as to be sure they could all be answered? Or was Mr. Blaisdel himself in the plot? "No," say our opponents, "his piety, his veracity, and his utter aversion to the purpose of it, forbid the suspicion." It is therefore *probable* that the same creature, who appeared and disappeared so often in the view of the people, and could tell them where they should be and what they would say and do in future time, was the true author of this information.

At a certain time, when thirty people where convened to hear her conversation, the name of a certain woman, who was absent, happened to be introduced. "That woman," said the ghost, "has enjoyed a revival lately." Immediately one of the company went to her and asked what had lately been the state of her mind. She related it to him, and he told her that her information and that of the Spectre agreed. Upon this she came and saw the Spectre; heard her conversation for several hours, and expressed abundant satisfaction and delight.

At the time when fifty people heard her discourse, while more than forty saw her; to some of them, who had no more believed these extraordinary events than mankind now do in general, she mentioned several occurrences of her past life known to them and her, but not divulged, in order to satisfy them that she was the very person she professed to be. Almost all this company had been acquainted with her in her lifetime, and a considerable number of them very intimately. She desired that any of them would ask what questions they pleased, for the removal of any doubts respecting her, which might exist in their minds. Accordingly certain persons did propose several questions respecting a number of events in her past life not divulged, which were so minute and circumstantial as to render the hypothesis of their being all so exactly rehearsed, as now to become the medium of

artifice, utterly absurd and irrational. To all these inquiries she gave complete, satisfactory answers.

But not to detain you, I will now only ask, *How shall I judge of these facts?* Shall I suppose that some artful girl personating that deceased woman, could present herself before forty people, well acquainted with that woman in her lifetime? Tell them by a voice inimitable not to be afraid—to stand as near as they pleased, and ask as many questions as they pleased, and all without fear of discovery? What subtle person would not be subtle enough to avoid such a perilous situation?

I remain yours.

LETTER V.

The evidence deduced from her predictions.

Dear Sir:—I must now ask your attention to the arguments furnished by her predictions.

She foretold what the opinion and conduct of mankind would be with regard to her, and the ill treatment which Mr. Blaisdel's family would receive on her account. She not only declared the necessity, but foretold the certainty of the marriage, at an hour when both the parties and both their families opposed it, if there was any thing to be known by the harmony of words and actions; yet the attachment of the parties seems to have been mutual from first to last. The pasara of the paradox is future: for mankind have more than one character, and the alector of *Æsop* will despise what a jeweller would prize.

She not only predicted the prosecution, but named a particular person as one who would certainly be present at the court for a witness, eleven months before these events took place.

She named another particular person, as one who should be present at the trial by the Grand Jury, and foretold what kind of language he would utter in their presence, eleven months before the accomplishment.

In about a month after, that is, ten months before the accomplishment, an oath of its existence was given before a magistrate. The person too, who is the subject of this prediction, and fulfilled it, was never a friend, but invariably the foe of the *Spectre* from first to last. She foretold to forty people the issue of that trial, eleven months before the

accomplishment. To the genuine friends of literature in this place, who were sincerely opposing superstition and legerdemain, this prediction was made known.

They were warned of the disadvantage which they must suffer, if they persisted.

They disbelieved the prediction, despised it, and became the involuntary subjects of its fulfillment at the time appointed. Within thirty hours after Mrs. Butler's marriage, the Spectre predicted that she would become the parent of but one child and then die. Ten months after this her child was born, and she died the next day. The safe return of one bound to the West Indies was also foretold and accomplished.

These predictions are all fulfilled and were previously and sufficiently known in this vicinity for evidence that they *were* such. She uttered several other predictions now accomplished. But as these events might possibly be foreknown or strongly conjectured by other means, the mention of them is omitted. Not only her words but her behaviour too, manifested the spirit of prophecy. The reinterment of the child was a practical oath, and never would have been thought of but for her direction. Friends and foes were all in one condition—all unable to conceive or even to conjecture the design of it, till it was manifested eighteen months afterwards, by certain, special, unexpected events of divine Providence. If then we take an impartial and connecting view of these and all the preceding evidences, how absurd is the hypothesis that all these evidences could be the effect, either of imagination or artifice! How much more rational is the opinion which has obtained credit in all ages and nations, that the spirit of deceased persons do sometimes appear, however incapable we are of learning all the purposes for which such events are designed!

By misapprehension and misinformation, piety and veracity may give you an account very different from mine. But ask those people of piety and veracity, who were present when the greatest of these events took place, I tell you they will not deny these facts. I am yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

Miscellany.

Dear Sir :—If the preceding arguments can be received, perhaps you will not indulge distrust, if I subjoin something of my own experience, confirmed by two other persons who

saw the apparition in the same field in the same half hour.

Sometime in July, 1806, in the evening, I was informed by two persons that they had just seen the Spectre in the field.

About ten minutes after, I went out, not to see a miracle, for I believed that they had been mistaken. Looking toward an eminence, twelve rods distance from the house, I saw there, as I supposed, one of the white rocks. This confirmed my opinion of their spectre, and I paid no more attention to it. Three minutes after, I accidentally looked in the same direction, and the white rock was in the air; its form a complete Globe, white with a tincture of red, like the damask rose, and its diameter about two feet.

Fully satisfied that this was nothing ordinary, I went toward it for more accurate examination.

While my eye was constantly upon it, I went on four or five steps, when it came to me from the distance of eleven rods, as quick as lightning, and instantly assumed a personal form with a female dress, but did not appear taller than a girl seven years old. While I looked upon her, I said in my mind, "you are no tall enough for the woman who has so frequently appeared among us." Immediately she grew up as large and as tall as I considered that woman to be. Now she appeared glorious. On her head was the representation of the sun diffusing the luminous, rectilinear rays every way to the ground. Through the rays I saw the personal form, and the woman's dress. Then I recollected the objection of the Encyclopedia, that, "Ghosts always appear to one alone." Now, said my mind, I see you as plainly as ever I saw a person on earth; but were I to converse with you an hour, what proof could I produce that I ever conversed with you at all. This, with my fear, was the reason why I did not speak to her. But my fear was connected with ineffable pleasure.

Life, simplicity, purity, glory, all harmonizing in this celestial form, had the most delightful effect on my mind. And there appeared such a dullness afterwards upon all corporeal objects as I never perceived before. I went into the house and gave the information, not doubting that she had come to spend some time with us, as she had before. We went out to see her again; but to my great disappointment, she had vanished. Then I saw one of the great errors of my life. That I had not spoken to her has been the matter of my regret from that hour to this.

My word without witness has not been tedious. Believed or rejected, it may do you no harm.

On the more sure ground of attestation, I will now relate some instances of her appearing or conversing, or performing both in the day time.

Sometime in March, 1800, she talked a few minutes without appearing, at eight o'clock in the morning, and promised to come again that day. At two o'clock, performed her promise, and talked with four people two hours. It was then she uttered these words: "Though my body is consumed, and all turned to dust, my soul is as much alive, as before I left the body."

This conversation was indeed in the cellar, but the place was enlightened by her radiance.

May 21, at ten o'clock, she appeared to two persons, and sent a message to another.

May 25, 10 o'clock. Appeared and conversed with two witnesses, while a third person only heard the conversation; and revealed that by which the same was proved to others.

May 26. She appeared at eight o'clock in the morning, and talked with four persons an hour and a half. In half an hour after, she appeared and talked with the same four persons, while two others only heard a voice without knowing what was said.

May 27. Talked with two persons, and promised to be present at a meeting of about twenty people, which was to be held the next day in the evening.* Accordingly she appeared at this meeting to two other persons, who were ignorant of the promise. The assembly were immediately interrupted by the declaration, that "the spirit is come." None however, could distinctly see her, but those two persons. The next evening after, she conversed with a third couple of persons in company with the first two; mentioned her promise as being fulfilled, and told them by her inimitable voice to whom she had appeared. As a further confirmation that she had been really present on this occasion: she did about two months afterwards talk several hours in the midst of the assembly of forty-eight people, while she was visible to two, and only two, of that number.† These two people were a

*This meeting was the wedding. He who is able to receive it, let him receive it. One infinitely greater than this Spectre, attended the marriage at Cana in Gallilee.

† In about an hour after she appeared to forty of this assembly. But I must here also insert a particular observation of Dr. Rush in his chapter of illusions; "When a person fancies that he hears voices and sees objects, which do not

fourth couple distinct from the other six. Such is the testimony of these eight persons.

Her conversation was always with grace, seasoned with salt, very affecting and delightful.

August 13, at 10 o'clock, she talked with three persons invisibly. At two o'clock the same day, she appeared and talked to three people in the hearing of five other persons.

Thus have you received a general, but very imperfect account of these extraordinary events.

And now because a juggler will appear to check a musket ball with the point of his knife, form animals, and perform a thousand other idle wonders, will any lover of truth indulge the inference that all the preceding phenomena are of the same nature? Do these magicians reveal and establish truths, the knowledge of which is of great importance to certain persons now, and of public utility hereafter? No: Their miracles are without meaning, and their design is pecuniary profit, or else to shew what they can do to gratify the vain curiosity of spectators.

Mountebanks do not *commonly* unite their employment with religious order, prayer and praise, or with solemn admonitions of life and death, blessing and cursing: Nor do their idle exhibitions so harmonize with the common operations of Divine Providence as that the former and the latter have manifestly the same ultimate purposes. This harmony is more than artifice can produce. Besides, who ever knew an instance like this in view, which, with all its circumstances, was afterwards fairly proved to be a deception? And if mountebanks never did exhibit such a variety in such circumstances, without the least partial discovery, we may be sure they never could. For doubtless they have done all they could do to impose on mankind by this species of iniquity.

It would perhaps afford you some satisfaction to know what other persons here would say respecting these transactions. I shall therefore improve the first opportunity to send you a copy of the oaths and attestations, which have been given by those who favor the cause, and by those who oppose it.

I continue yours to serve for the promotion of truth.

exist, he has these sensations alone. The voice supposed to be heard, says he, and the objects supposed to be seen, are never heard nor seen by two persons, even when they are close to each other."—*Disease of the Mind*, chapter 15.

The inference then is certain, with respect to those witnesses, that no mental disease could be the true origin of their hearing and vision.

SECTION III.

The Proofs produced by Testimony.

The following pages, for brevity's sake, present only the extracts from some of the oaths and numerous testimonies of those who oppose and of those who favor the cause. With all these witnesses I am intimately acquainted. I took these testimonies from their lips, for the most part, separately. I wrote them; read them in their hearing, and obtained their approbation of what I had written. I made but little alteration in their language, because I chose that their testimonies should appear in their own native simplicity. Therefore the philological critic has no employment here. Among the testimonies of the opponents, I have left nothing unextracted, which, in my apprehension, could seem to afford any argument in their favor; or from which, to my recollection, they themselves have ever deduced any argument for their purpose. If, however, I have failed here or in any other respect, they will doubtless have opportunity to make it known.

For the most remarkable occurrences, I have generally selected only two or three witnesses, not for the want of more, by any means, but because the patience of the reader must not be exercised by tedious repetition more than is necessary for the present design.

EXTRACTS FROM THE OATHS.

Deposition of Capt. Paul Simson.

About the first of August, 1800, Mr. H. and his wife came to my house and desired me to go to Mr. Blaisdel's with them. After we got there, they said the Spirit sent for me.

I went down into the cellar, and soon after it rapped. I asked what it wanted. It told me that I had done wrong; I had become hard against her—that I had disbelieved. I told her I had. She said that satan had tempted me and that I had sinned. I asked her if she loved Christ. She said, yes, I do. I told her the work of the saints was to praise God. Yes, she said, and Christ too, and broke out in singing alleluias.

At another time she ordered us to place ourselves two and two, and she would follow us to Capt. M's, and ordered us to sing a Psalm as we went. In going there I never saw her. As we walked back, I walked behind. I looked back and saw her. She appeared to me dressed all in white; as bright a white as ever I saw, and had the appearance of a woman and bigness.

PAUL SIMSON.

The Deposition of Mrs. Sarah Simson.

On August 7, Mr. Blaisdel came to my house and said the voice had sent him for more witnesses, and that Mr. Simson and I must go to his house. I was very much affrighted, and could not think what he wanted. He said the Spirit had

sent him for more witnesses, and that I must go. I then told him that Mr. Simson said the apparition had appeared at our house the night before. My husband and I then went with him. After we had been there some time, there was a knocking—some spoke to her. She then asked if we wanted to know who she was. It was answered, yes. She then said three times, “I was once N—— B——.” There were many questions asked, which she answered very directly. I asked, are you from happiness or misery? To which she answered, “I am from above, and am come on God’s message;” and fell to singing alleluias.

After discoursing some time, she said she was going to appear to us, and we must place ourselves two and two and come into the cellar, and she would shew herself. We complied. I was of the last couple who went into the cellar. It was my desire not to see her. She said, those who did not desire to see her, should not. I saw nothing. And though she was so near to me, as I was told by P—— B——, as that I could touch her if I had put out my hand, and I looked to see her; yet, as I had said I did not want to see her, I could not see her. I also, while in the field looked to see her, yet I did not see her. SARAH SIMSON.

The next deposition was given by one who looks upon the whole scene to be a great deception, some how or other.

The Deposition of Mr. Thomas Uron.

In August 11, 1800, I was at the house of A. Blaisdel. I went on purpose to hear and see what I could concerning a Spirit which was said to be there. In the evening there was a knocking round the house; but nothing spake. We all concluded there would be nothing said or seen. The next morning about day-break, there seemed to be knockings round the house, and in the chamber, and round my bed. We immediately got up, and going down I took a candle, lighted it, and went into the cellar alone, examining if there was no one there to deceive us. I could not see any body. I came back. Mr. Blaisdel, with all in the house went down cellar—we heard a knocking. Some one spake in the name of God, and asked what she wanted. She asked if we wanted to know who she was. We answered, yes. She told us she was once N—— B——. She then said to me, “you have often said that I am a devil or a witch.” I then asked

her, if she was from the God of heaven or from misery. She answered, "I am from above, praising God and the Lamb;" she then broke out in praise. She then told us that she had come to warn us from sin, and that if there was not a change before the soul left the body, we should be forever miserable. She then told us the danger a sinner was in, out of Christ, and told us that she should rise in the day of judgment against us. I told her I had a great desire that she should appear. And then she appeared to us all who had a desire to see her.

She appeared like a person who was wrapped in a white sheet, appearing and disappearing several times. It was near sun rise at this time.

She then told us that was the day that Christ rose from the dead, and that it was God's precious time, and must be kept unto him.

Lydia, (Mrs. Butler) was not in the cellar while the foregoing talk was. The Spirit asked me if I would not clear Lydia; I answered I would, for it was not she who talked.

THOMAS URAN.

Deposition of Capt. George Butler.

When I was called to talk with this voice, I asked, "who are you?" It answered, "I was once your wife." The voice asked me, "Do you not remember what I told you when I was alive." I answered, "I do not really know what you mean." The voice said, "Do you not remember I told you I did not think I should live long with you. I told you that if you was to leave me I should never wish to change my condition; but that if I was to leave you, I could not blame you, if you did."

This passed between me and my first wife, while she was alive, and there was no living person within hearing, but she and myself, and I am sure that this was never revealed to any person, and no living person could have told it to me before the voice did. As Lydia (Mrs. Butler) and I stood side and side alone,* she had her left arm round me and her right hand hold of the forward part of my waistcoat, her head leaning against my breast. There was something appeared to my view right before me, like a person in a winding sheet and her arms folded under the winding sheet, and

*This only means that they were together at a little distance from the rest of the company in the same apartment.

on her arm there appeared to be a very small child. By this appearance I did not know possibly but I might be deceived. I reached out my left hand to take hold of it. I saw my hand in the middle of it, but could feel nothing. The same evening it appeared and disappeared to me three times.

GEORGE BUTLER.

Lincoln, ss.—Sullivan, August 6, 1800. Personally appeared Paul Simson, Sarah Simson, Thomas Uran and George Butler, who, being carefully examined as to the truth of the above declarations, made solemn oath that the statements were true.

The Testimonies by difference of opinion have naturally two parts, that of the opponents and that of the adherents.

The first part presents the attestation of those who consider these phenomena as a scene of wickedness.

TESTIMONY I.

Testimony of Miss H. G.

August 9, 10. I was at the house of Mr. Blaisdel, by the persuasion of others; for as to myself I made very light of the matter, supposing that the whole was the contrivance of certain persons, and I believe still that nothing good appeared there.

We heard rappings, and these sounds were spoken too, but no answer obtained. After much altercation (which is needless to rehearse) we all came out of the cellar, and all went off, except a few persons, of whom I was one. Some of Mr. Blaisdel's family uttered severe expressions against those who went off and did not believe. "What do you want they should believe," said I; "for my part I see nothing to believe." Immediately Mrs. Butler came in from the entry very much affrighted, "If any one desires to be convinced," said she, "let him look there in the entry." I looked there and saw nothing. Soon after this, while Mrs. Butler was sitting on the foot of a bed, we heard a sound right against her on the outside of the house. Mr. Butler told her to speak to it. At first she refused. They told her she must. Then she said to it, "If I am guilty stay away; if I am clear in the name of the Lord clear me." The Spirit then rapped very hard, so as to shake the house. Some of the company said she must go into the cellar. "So I must," said she; "if I do not, she will come into the room: and if she does, I shall die.* Who will go with me?"

*She then expressed not only her own feelings but those of the family. The idea of a Spectre coming into the room, where they commonly were, was distressing to them, as already observed.

D—— A—— said she would go. They went,* and soon after we all went down. Then I plainly heard the voice say to Mrs. Butler, "Go up, that the people may not think it is you who speaks." I saw her go up into the room, and heard at the same time the voice in the cellar. Mr. Blaisdel asked the Spirit whence she came. She answered, "I am from heaven. I am with God and with Christ—angels and seraphim, praising God. Glory, glory, glory." Mr. Blaisdel asked why she did not manifest herself in the fore part of that night to all the people. She answered, "I was not permitted to come where there was so much sin." The Spirit then said to Mr. Blaisdel, "Ask the people if they are convinced." He did so; and I among the rest answered that I was. But I think otherwise now. God knew who would be there the forepart of that night. Why did he send her? Then the Spirit said, "I must appear;" and by her direction we placed ourselves in order. Then I saw a white appearance, at first not more than a foot in height, but it appeared larger and larger, and more plainly, and when it came nearer to me, I was struck with fear and left the cellar; but others told me that afterwards they saw the Spirit plainly.

August 13-14, I again went to Mr. Blaisdel's with forty-seven persons. The Spirit now told us again that she was from heaven, and that she was once N—— H——. After much conversation the Spirit said that some of the people were faint, and could not hear all that was to be said, and that we must go up and refresh ourselves. "You must go with me to two places this night," said she, "and you must be ready at one o'clock." "What o'clock is it now," said Mr. Blaisdel; she said, "twelve, twelve, twelve." We went up immediately and looked on the watch, and it was exactly twelve. In a short time, hearing the usual sign, we returned. Among many other words which I do not remember, Mr. Downing asked the Spirit if she knew him; she answered, "yes," and called him by name. He asked if she was ever at his house. She answered that she had been once there with her mother. At length she told us that we must go up and she would walk with us behind, with Mrs. Butler. But you must walk in order, two and two, said she, singing a Psalm: for God is a God of order. Some person asked when she would be ready. She said, "I will let you know."

*I find no evidence that these two went without others.

Some person again asked what o'clock it was. She answered, *one*. We went up and again looked on the watch and it was *one*. We attended prayer, and immediately after she knocked. A Psalm was chosen, which the greatest number of us could best remember, and it was sung as we walked. I was now far forward and did not see the Spirit. When we came to Capt. Millar's, the Spirit rapped there, and Capt. Millar with Capt. Paul Blaisdel and some others, went into the cellar, and I heard them talk, but could not understand what was said to them. Then word came to us that we must stand out in the field before the house—that she would appear before us, and walk with Mrs. Butler, that the people might be convinced that Mrs. Butler had told the truth in relating that she had walked with her before. Then we all stood before the house. Mrs. Butler put on a black cloak, and when she had walked a little distance from us, as before directed by the Spirit, I heard her groan bitterly, and soon after I saw the appearance of a woman in white, walking with her. Suddenly Mrs. Butler sung a part of that hymn called New Jerusalem. Then she came to us and we all went back in order to Mr. Blaisdel's. I then looked back and saw a person in white walking with Mrs. Butler. After we returned to the house, Mrs. Butler appeared very weary and exhausted. I asked her at what time the Spirit came to her. She told me it was after she had walked a little distance from the people. "When you heard me groan, said she, then I saw it coming toward me. I am always more afraid when I only see it, than I am after it has spoken to me:*" and she now told me not to be seared; that she was not come to hurt me, and that if I would sing a hymn, it would expel my fears." HANNAH GATCOMB.

TESTIMONY II.

Testimony of Mr. Paul Simson, Jun.

August 9, 1800. I was at Mr. A. Blaisdel's, with many more, and heard the sound of knocking. It was addressed, and a voice answered, but I could not understand it. Several persons spoke, but received no satisfactory answer. The people generally concluded that the whole affair was some deception. Therefore they went off and I among them. But my reflections on that singular knocking, induced me to say to two young men, "If you will go back, I will, and

*This experience is testified by all who saw and heard.

find out something more, if possible ; for I am no more satisfied now, than I was before I went to that house." We went back. Mr. Blaisdel asked us why we returned. I told him that we had all gone off with the opinion that the whole affair was a scheme contrived by his daughters, and nothing more, and I meant if possible, to find them out. " You must think as you please," said he, " I am clear, and I believe my family is." I told him I wished to see all his family sitting in one part of the room. They complied. Then I took a candle and stood in the midst of the room. After several minutes, something rapped near where two of us stood, and from thence removed to several parts of the house. " What do you think of it," said Mr. Blaisdel ? " It appears, said I, to be strange." " We will go into the cellar," said Mr. Blaisdel, " and, if you think any body is there, search the cellar through with a candle : " we did so. I came out last and was careful and watched, so that I was sure that no person went down. Also the outer door was fast. Then again we heard the sound of knocking. It was addressed, and conversation followed, in the midst of which Mr. Blaisdel said to me, " If you think any living person talks, go forward and grasp that person." I went forward a few steps, but was so convinced that no body was there, that I considered all further attempts as useless.

After much discourse, which I cannot remember, the Spirit told us that we must go up and come down again in order, two and two, and she would appear to us. We did so, and I saw the apparition at first about two feet in height ; but, as it drew nearer to me, it appeared as tall as a person. I saw this appearance passing *close by me and from me five or six times*. At last it diminished to about a foot in height and then vanished.

PAUL SIMSON, Jun.

TESTIMONY III.

Testimony of Miss Sally Martin.

August 13, 1800, I was at Mr. Blaisdel's house, with more than forty people, besides their own family, and heard knockings. We all wondered, when we heard a sound on one side or corner of the house ; the next sound on the opposite side or corner, and a third sound equally distant from the second, and so on for a number of sounds, while the succession was as rapid as one sound could be clearly distinguished

from another. We were sure that no person, nor even several persons, could make sounds so distant from each other in such quick succession, even were it possible for them to be in or near the places of these sounds, without discovery. By the desire of the Spirit and Mr. Blaisdel, we went into the cellar. Mr. Blaisdel told the people to stand back and give the Spirit room, and not crowd so near her, "don't crowd her," said he, "she cannot talk if you crowd her."

When we were placed, Mr. Blaisdel ordered the candle to be blown out, and stood before the company next to the Spirit.* When these things were done, the affair was become as dark to me, as the cellar was. I heard much conversation with several people by a voice which I never heard before. This voice at last told us to go up and go to a certain house and she would go with us. We did as the voice told us: and, as we went, I saw a personal form, as white as any thing could possibly appear, walking by Mrs. Butler's side, with locked arms. When we came to the only outer door of the house, I saw this form at a distance from me, abroad, though near the house, I went in and heard a knocking immediately under the floor. In two or three minutes I heard the same voice that I had heard before, talking with Capt. Millar.

By the desire of the voice, we stood before the house that she might appear to us. There I saw the personal form as plainly as ever I saw a living person: and I saw the same form vanish before me in a moment. SALLY MARTIN.

On this testimony a few observations must detain the reader. We are liable to be deceived two ways: by the appearance of truth where it is not, and by the appearance of deception where it is not.

Did not such an occasion as this require order? The Spectre was about to communicate to the assembly an important message. Could they enjoy the best advantage to hear and attend to it, while they were changing places,—crowding and interrupting one another? Is not a voice better understood by any auditory, if there be some intermediate space between the speaker and hearer? What did they want a candle for, unless they wanted to be deceived? The Spectre was white; so is a deceiver by a candle. The Spectre told them the exact time of night; so could a deceiver by a candle. Did they want a candle in order to see her? They had learned, or might have learned already, that she could make herself as visible without a candle, as any person living could with it. Four nights before this, she appeared to fourteen persons in this very place, and six persons saw the hand pass through the apparition.

Two nights before this, she appeared to about twenty people, forming an ellipse, within which she slowly passed round so near the circumference several

* This, however, he denies, but suppose it were true, why was it improper that in his own house he should choose the place where he would stand? If they knew where he was, that was sufficient.

times, that every one of them might have handled her with deliberation, and she had also expressed her desire to give satisfaction by this experiment.

Therefore it was not because she was afraid to be seen or handled, that Mr. Blaisdel made this arrangement; but for reasons possibly unknown to us. But *probably* one of them was this: On the night of this testimony, August 13, it was one design of the Spectre to confirm what was past, by conducting as she had before, May 28.* That is: by appearing only to two or three persons, while to all others in the assembly, though conversing with her, she should remain invisible. This, we are assured, by testimony 11 and 14, part 2nd, was now performed. On the above May 28, a third person thought he saw her, but was not sure; for he supposed he might be deceived by some change of the candle light.

Hence we easily see that those two persons who saw her on this night of August 13, while she invisibly discoursed with the assembly, obtained more satisfaction for others, if not for themselves, that what they saw was reality, than if there had been a candle; especially if we consider that several women of the assembly were dressed in white.

TESTIMONY IV.

Testimony of Capt. James Millar.

August 7. Mr. Blaisdel came to my house and desired me to go to his own, where I might hear and see for myself. He also went to Capt. Samuel Simson's with the same request. Capt. Simson and his wife, S—— B——, and N—— G——, who were there, came with him to my house, and we all went to Mr. Blaisdel's. When we had been there some minutes, Capt. Simson, by desire, prayed. His prayer was immediately followed by a knocking, and we all went into the cellar. Mr. Blaisdel asked what was wanted, and who it was. It answered, "I was once N. H." I asked, "How was man made?" "Out of the dust," said the voice, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return. You have the Bible, and that is God's truth, and do you abide by it. Love God and keep his commandments." After some conversation with Mrs. Simson and others, she said, "I must go," and we heard no more. It was now broad day-light, the outer cellar door being open, and utterly impossible that any living person should be there, but those whom we could see and know. The voice was about six feet from me.

August 9. I went to that house with many people, among whom I observed much disorderly behaviour. The Spirit spake but little, and I returned with a resolution to go no more to that house on such an errand.

August 14. Just before day-light, I heard singing, as I lay in bed, approaching to my house. Presently, by my leave, my house was filled with people, and I heard knock-

* See the date in the last letter, page 39.

ings on the floor. By the desire of certain persons, I went into the cellar with Capt. P—— B——. After some discourse of the voice with him, which I understood not, I heard sounds of knocking near me. I asked, what do you want of me. It answered, "I have come to let you know that I can speak in this cellar as well as in the other.* Are you convinced?" I answered, "I am." "Now," said the voice, "the company must be solemn and stand in order before your door, I am going to appear. Now do you remember that I was once N. H." We went up and complied with her direction, and I saw a personal shape coming toward us, white as the light. By the Spectre's order, as I was informed, Mrs. Butler went toward her. "Lydia," said the Spectre, "you are scared. You must sing." Then she sung an hymn. The Spirit came almost to us; then turned, and Mrs. Butler with her, and went several rods towards Capt. Simson's and appeared to take her by the hand to urge her on further; and disappeared in our sight.

Mrs. Butler returned and informed the company, as I was told, that if they would walk to Mr. Blaisdel's solemnly as to a funeral, the Spirit would walk with Mrs. Butler behind them. The company did so. But I being far forward, saw nothing. Mrs. Butler had expressed her unwillingness to go to Capt. Simson's, and was excused, as she afterwards told us.

JAMES MILLAR.

TESTIMONY V.

Testimony of Mrs. M. G.

On the 4th of August, 1800, about two hours before daylight, while I slept in Mr. Blaisdel's house, I was waked by the sound of knocking. I got up, and with about twenty others went into the cellar. There I heard such a voice speaking to us as I never heard before nor since. It was shrill, but very mild and pleasant.

Mr. Blaisdel, in addressing the voice, said that several persons, (of whom I was one) had come from a distance to obtain satisfaction, and desired that she would tell us who she was, and the design of her coming. She answered, "I was once N. H. and after I was married, I was N. B." After much conversation upon the design of her coming, she appeared to us. At first the apparition was a mere mass of

*He had said that Mr. Blaisdel's family could not raise the Spirit any where but in their own house, as several testified.

light: then grew into personal form, about as tall as myself. We stood in two ranks about four or five feet apart. Between these ranks she slowly passed and repassed, so that any of us could have handled her. When she passed by me, her nearness was that of contact; so that if there had been a substance, I should have certainly felt it. The glow of the apparition had a constant tremulous motion. At last the personal form became shapeless—expanded every way, and then vanished in a moment.

Then I examined my own white gown and handkerchief, but I could no more see them than if they had been black.

Nothing more being now seen or heard, we were moving to go up, when the voice spake again and desired us to tarry longer. We did so, and the Spirit talked with us another hour, even till broad day-light. She mentioned to us the ill treatment which Mr. Blaisdel's family had suffered by reproach and false accusation, and told us that they would, on her account, be more despised and ridiculed in time to come, than they had been already.

Her discourse concluded by a solemn exhortation to the old, the middle aged and the young. The present life, she said, was but a moment, in which we must be renewed or be miserable forever.

In her address to the youth she observed that it was now the Lord's day, and that we must retire to our homes, read the Bible, pray and keep the day holy. It was then she uttered these lines of Dr. Watts.

"This is the day when Christ arose
So early from the dead;
Why should I keep my eyelids closed,
And waste my hours in bed?"

After speaking much more which I cannot remember, she sang praises and left us.

Her notes were very pleasant. Her words were in no higher style than common, yet were they exceedingly impressive.

MARY GORDON.

TESTIMONY VI.

Testimony of Mrs. Sally Wentworth.

On the 2d of January 1800, Hannah Blaisdel came to Mr. Butler's house and informed me that the extraordinary voice which they had heard, had declared itself to be that of my sister, and that I must go to her father's house.

I told her to her face that I did not believe it.

The next day I received the same message by three other persons, two of which belonged to two other families, and returned the same answer. Nevertheless, to give satisfaction, Capt. Butler, Mr. Wentworth and I went with them to that house. Capt. Butler and I examined the cellar with a candle, and in a few minutes after, Lydia and I went down there. Capt. S——n and some others, went with us, but none of them stood before us. While I held Lydia by the arm, we heard the sound of knocking. Lydia spoke, and a voice answered, the sound of which brought fresh to my mind that of my sister's voice, in an instant; but I could not understand it at all; though it was within the compass of my embrace, and, had it been a creature which breathed, it would have breathed in my face, and I had no impediment of hearing. But Lydia told me that it said, "We must live in peace and be united." Then we came up. But Capt. S——n with Lydia and others, went down again. I passed through the room which led to the cellar into another room, and there I was much surprised when I plainly understood by the same kind of voice, still speaking in the cellar, these words, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness;" and other sentences, which I cannot remember. This is testified by several others who were with me.*

From this time I cleared Lydia as to the voice, and accused the devil.

August 8, I was there again with about thirty others, and heard much conversation. Her voice was still hoarse and thick, like that of my sister on her death bed,† but more hollow. Sometimes it was clear, and always pleasant. A certain person did, in my opinion very unwisely, ask her whether I was a true Christian. The reply was, "She thinks she is, she thinks she is. She is my sister."

August 13—14, I heard the same voice in the same place, and did then believe it was that of my sister. She talked much with Capt. S——n, and exhorted the people. Mr. Sp——r asked her if I believed that she was my sister. The answer was, "She believes now." By the direction of the Spirit we went to Capt. M——r's, but I never saw her.

Sometime after this, Mr. Butler brought to me from the Spectre, the private conversation which I know I had with

*That is, that they heard the same words.

†There was not only this similarity in voice, but the same phrases, which she was accustomed to use, and which were peculiar to her in her life time, she uttered now, as several of her intimate acquaintances have informed me.

my sister in her lifetime, at a certain hour, when we were alone together, and which he declares he never knew before; as a token that I was her sister. It is true I had never revealed it to any person, and I do not believe that my sister ever did; but could not some evil spirit hear that conversation, and afterwards personate my sister, and reveal it to Capt. Butler? For what purpose should my sister become visible to us?—There was certainly no dispute nor difficulty in my father's family or that of Mr. Butler's, which could be any reason for her coming.

SALLY WENTWORTH.

Mrs. Wentworth had now an opportunity to hear the voice of Lydia and the voice of the Spectre in the same time and place, that she might have the best advantage to judge whether or not there was the least agreement between them. And that Lydia had never learned to utter two voices in the same minute, the one her natural voice, the other the dying voice of this woman's sister, appears from the certainty that through all the time of the Spectre's last sickness and death, Lydia was two hundred miles distant from her.

When Mrs. Wentworth heard in the east room that sentence of the ghost, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness;" this was the only time in which the ghost uttered these words for that day, as several witnesses (nem. con.) declare. Hence it follows that this was the exact minute when Captain Simson, in the cellar, within eight feet of the voice, and free from deafness, heard only a sound, while they who stood by him understood the words plainly. (Compare this with a sentence in Test. 4, 2d part.)

The reality of the token appears from the undoubted veracity of Mrs. W., her inflexible opposition and the oath of Capt. Butler, the reputed dupe of the whole business.

TESTIMONY VII.

Testimony of Mr. Jeremiah Bunker.

On August 9, 1800, I went to Mr. Blaisdel's, where there were about twelve people.

After hearing the discourse of the Spectre, she appeared before us and disappeared several times. She came close by me and three or four others several times, so that each of us could have handled her. The personal shape, when it disappeared, first changed to a substance, without form, and then vanished in a moment where it was: and after a short space, the full personal form appeared again in a moment. These changes I observed several times. I thought then and ever since that the whole was a deception. For I cannot see how there could be such a clear personal shape, where no living person was. She was in the shape of a person as much as any person could be.

JEREMIAH BUNKER.

The second part presents the attestation of those who favor the cause, or at least have not appeared openly against it.

TESTIMONY I.

Testimony of Mr. Abner Blaisdel.

May 29, 1800. The Spectre conversed with three of my family. To dispel their fears, she introduced her conversation by these words: "I have come again,* be not afraid, I will not hurt you, I did not come here to hurt you, I am a friend to you all." One of them answered, "I cannot help being afraid." "You need not be," said the Spectre, "you need not be. I never did hurt you, did I?" No: it was answered: "And I shall not hurt you," said the Spectre. "Put your things in place.† Conduct as formerly: for nothing will hurt you."

To Capt. Butler the Spectre said, "Be kind to your wife: for she will not be with you long. She will have but one child and then die." It was now that the Spirit sent a token to Mrs. Hooper, her mother, by which Mrs. Hooper declares she must have been her daughter.

August 6. I had for some time heard that my father was sick, but had since received no news from him. I ventured to ask how my father did; "He is in heaven," said she, "praising God with the angels." I afterwards found by other means, that my father died seven days before this. He lived two hundred miles from me.

When she left us at this time, the voice sounded in the air further and further from us, uttering these words: "I am in heaven, praising God and the Lamb with angels, arch-angels, cherubim and seraphim. Glory, glory, glory to God

*She had come several times before, as the preceding letters show. Five months before this, Mr. Blaisdel's son P. and his sisters, were sent by the ghost to a house where several young people were met for amusement; not for this purpose, but for terminating a difference between them and one of that company. The ghost strictly charged them to go and return in peace, and to abstain from all appearance of evil. The propriety of this small errand appears by its connections and the events which followed. But, as it stands insulated before the eyes of pride and folly, how despicable it must appear! Had such eyes looked on, when the first silk worm was formed, it would have appeared a trivial and useless contrivance. "As the heavens are higher than the earth; so are my ways higher than your ways, saith the Lord, and my thoughts than your thoughts." It would be very strange indeed, if a messenger from heaven should have much to perform in such a world as this, and yet meet with no opposition; and equally strange, if that messenger should perform nothing but what mankind would naturally expect, especially in a period when christians themselves have not escaped the contagion of infidelity.

† The children, through fear, had moved their beds into the room where their parents lodged.

and the Lamb. I am going, I am going, I am going to Christ."

August 8. About thirty people came to my house. That night the Spectre had much solemn conversation with them on religious subjects. Mr. N. H——n expressed his desire to handle her, and she gave him liberty. Some times the inimitable voice would sound ten or twelve feet from us, then close to our face, then again at a distance: and these changes were instantaneous. After broad day-light, the outer door being open, when we could plainly see each other, the voice spake to all, and said, "Let any one who pleases, come and handle me: for Christ says that a spirit hath not flesh and bones."

Some person then said to Mr. H——n, "Now if you want to handle her why dont you go?"

Then he crowded through the people to the place where the voice was still speaking, and said, "I find nothing here to handle."

August 9, 1800. We placed ourselves in order, according to the direction of the Spectre; and a white appearance, at first very small, rose before me and grew to a personal stature and form. It stood directly before Capt. Butler, while he and his wife stood beside each other. I saw him put his hand on the apparition, and I saw his hand pass through it. Then it vanished. There were now about twelve persons here.

On August 11, she discoursed with about twenty persons, of whom I was one. "I come," said she, "to warn you against sin, and if there is not a change before the soul leaves the body, you will be forever miserable."

After the Spirit had spoken many things of this nature, Mr. U. expressed his desire to see her, "You shall see me," said she, "I will appear to you all." She appeared and disappeared before us several times, and talked while she appeared. She came close to us, and some said they saw the child in her arms. My son P. observed it, and said, "Her child is now in her arms;" "So it is," said she, "so it is."

When it was day-light, she told us that this was the day when Christ rose from the dead—that it was God's precious time and must be kept holy, and that she must return to carry on the work of praise, and then sang praises and left us.

Next morning, while I was at work in my field, I was told that the Spirit had sent for me. I went into my house, heard a voice, but saw nothing.

This voice, which declared itself to be N. H. said, "Call for my parents, P. S. S. C., his wife and others, who appear to you to know Christ, that they may hear and see; for they will tell the truth." I performed the errand, and those persons came with more than forty others that night. I went into the cellar and asked who should come. "They must all come," said she, "leave not a soul behind." I gave the information and they complied. The Spirit first asked her parents whether they believed she was her daughter: and they said, "yes." "Do you want to see me?" said she. And they said, "No." She asked her father if he was ready to go with her, if the Lord should call him. "I am afraid I am not," said he, "but the Lord can make me willing." "That is right," she answered. Then after conversing with her mother, in a very affecting manner, she said to both, "You were my dear parents once; but now you are no more to me than others." Then to Capt. P. S. she said, "You have become hard against me." "So I have," said he. "Do you love Christ?" "Yes, I do," said she, "yes I do." P. S. "Then you love me." "Yes, I do. Do you not remember that soon after I was married, you told me that I was married to G. B. and how happy I should be, if I was married to Christ: and I said I was not; but I wished I was." P. S. "Yes, I remember it very well." "Now I am married to Christ," said she, "now I am married to Christ, now I am married to Christ."

"You used to meet with us at my house, and once, at the time of a certain prayer, I observed you to be much affected." "Yes, I was," said she, "and the Lord was then breaking my heart."

I then spake to her myself, and said, I never knew that you experienced a change of nature before you died, and I should be glad if you would tell when you experienced it. It was, said she, when I laid upon my death bed. Then she spake to her parents, and reminded them of the conversation which had passed between them at that time, respecting the loss of her child. Then it was, said she, that I received my change.

After much other conversation, which I do not remember, the Spirit said to us, "There is one of this family, who is not here." Some person asked if we should go and call him. She said, "No; I am going where he is. They say I can appear no where but here; but I mean to convince them

that I can appear in other places. I must appear before you all this night, and go to the next house and to another. You must all go up and be ready to walk with me. But you must walk in order, two and two, solemnly, as if you were following a friend to the grave. For the Lord is a God of peace and not of confusion. Sing a Psalm as you walk, and I will walk with Lydia after you." We all went up, and in about an hour after, we heard the token, and placed ourselves before the door, and hearing it again, we walked on to Capt. M's, and the Spirit knocked under his floor. He and my son went down and, after conversing with my son, she told Capt. M. who she was, and the purpose of her coming to his house, and asked him if he was satisfied, and he told her that he was. Then she directed him to go up and tell the people to stand in order before the door and she would appear before them in the field. They did so, and she appeared to them and disappeared, as some of them informed me. By her direction we walked back to my house in the same order, and then I saw her plainly about thirty feet from me, in the form and stature of a person; white as the light and moving after us like a cloud, without ambulatory motion.

ABNER BLAISDEL.

I have discoursed with all these persons, except two or three, whose names are mentioned in this testimony, and they all attest to almost all the facts which are here related, as being known to them.

TESTIMONY II.

Testimony of Miss Mary Card.

I am not only a witness to many things in the preceding relation, but I further declare that, on August 13, about two o'clock in the day, while Mr. Blaisdel was gone for evidence, the Spirit knocked, and M. M. and I went near to the place of the sound and asked what was wanted.

The Spirit answered "I have come, I have come. Make room for I am coming among you."* I pleaded that she would not. I must, I must, said she, dont be seared. I answered we were poor sinful creatures, and could not help it, and again earnestly entreated her not to come.

I now plainly saw her appear in shining white; and she asked me if any person in the house wanted to see her. I then called on Miss P. C. who in the same hour had said that "though she had heard the voice speak, she would not

*These words were heard by eight persons.

believe it was that of a ghost." I asked her now to come and see her, and she did. Now, said the ghost, satisfy yourselves. Here I am, here I am, satisfy yourselves. Miss P. C. answered that she was satisfied.* The ghost then spake several other things which I cannot remember. M. CARD.

TESTIMONY III.

Testimony of Miss Margaret Miller.

I was present at the same time, and heard all that is here declared by Miss Mary Card. I saw the apparition, and heard her speak at the same time. M. MILLER.

TESTIMONY IV.

Testimony of Capt. Paul Simson.

January 3, 1800, I was at the house of Mr. Blaisdel. His son P. desired me to go with him into the cellar. I went down with him and his two sisters, and Mrs. C. M.

I heard a rapping, and asked in the name of Christ what it wanted. I heard a voice considerably loud, but could not understand it. But some who were present, told me that it said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make his paths strait. Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him while he is near."

After some silence it rapped again. I spake to it in the name of Christ, and said, if there was any thing it could utter for peace, to utter it. It answered, "I am not to be trifled with. I am not to be trifled with. I am not to be trifled with. Peace, peace, peace."†

*This answer she now denies; but owns she saw the apparition.

†These enigmatical warnings were some of the first words which the voice uttered, and they appeared strange to us all. They appeared void of instruction, impertinent and utterly inapplicable to any thing which was seen, remembered, or expected among us. None were then trifling with her; all wondered, and many were solemnized. Nor was there any remarkable contention among us. But after she had produced her strange, unexpected, unheard of message, our behaviour soon fixed the meaning of these enigmas, and rendered them like apples of gold and pictures of silver. Her speaking so much in a by-place (a cellar) separate from the common dwelling of man, like John in the wilderness, has offended us. If her paths were the Lord's, instead of making them strait, we have made them crooked by misconception, misrepresentation, and falsehood. While the ghost was then speaking, one of the company was near eternity. Therefore "seek the Lord while he may be found."

With what contempt and ridicule has the ghost been treated on account of the marriage! Therefore "I am not to be trifled with," was pertinent. What violent contentions, occasioned by her messages, appropriate the terms "Peace, peace," or "there must be peace," as she more plainly said to another person about the same time.

Then they all went up, except Lydia and myself, and I held her by the hand. She was much terrified, and said, "I feel so I cannot stay: I must go up." Stay awhile, said I, perhaps it will speak again. "I cannot," said she, and began to urge me away. I consented, and when we had come up, she told me what I had myself perceived, that the cellar began to grow light, where the voice was uttered and that she heard a rushing noise.

Sometime after I was in the same cellar with a number of people and heard a plain voice; clearly understood by others, but not at all by myself, though as near to it as others and free from deafness. The voice appeared to me inimitable.

August 8, I was there again with thirty others and heard the conversation of the Spectre with several persons. Mr. N. H. mentioned his desire to handle her. "Handle me and see," said she, "for Christ tells you that a spirit is not flesh and bones."

Mr. T. U. said, "if you are a happy soul, intercede for me." The reply was, "None but Christ intercedes." "There are among us," said Mr. U., "several denominations of Christians: Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Methodists. Which of all these are right?" The voice answered, "There are good and bad of all these sorts for the elect's sake."*

In August 13-14, while I was at the same house, the Spirit informed us that she could not speak freely in the night of August 9, because the behaviour of the people had been so rude, but expressed her joy in discoursing with christians. You know, said I, a thousand times more than any of us. Yes I do, said she. Mr. Blaisdel said to me, you stand too near her. Then I asked, do I stand too near you? No, said she, stand as near as you please. I felt surprised, and said, it was a wonderful event. Yes, the spirit replied, it is a wonderful event indeed—do you not remember what you told me, just after I was married that if I was married to Christ, how happy I should live? Yes, I answered, I remember it very well. She exhorted the young people and told them that without a change they would be miserable.

*Here we see that the direct answer was entirely avoided. It was no design of her mission. We have the Bible by which even the angels must be tried. To the law and the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, it is because they have no light in them, from whatever world they may profess to come. She accordingly took this ground, and reasoned with the people out of the Scriptures as the standard of truth by which she would be tried.

After this, the spirit expressed her resolution to convince us that Mr. Blaisdel and his family were clear of the evils alleged against them.

They say I am a witch and a devil, said she; and they said that Christ was a devil. The spirit said other things, which I remember not.

At last she told them she was about to appear in order to convince them. Then by her direction we went up, and having prayed together, and heard the token, we walked on to Capt. M's, singing the 84th Psalm. I was one of the foremost of the company and did not see it then; but the greatest number of those who were behind me, said they saw it plainly.

When we were at Capt. M's house, we stood in the field, while Mrs. Butler, in great fear, walked with the Spirit before us,* a few rods toward Capt. Simson's; and then returned and told us that we must walk back, two and two, to her father's house singing, and the spirit would follow us back. We did so. Mr. D. and I walked behind all, except Mrs. Butler, in order if possible to see the apparition. When we had walked about fifteen rods, I saw a white appearance forward of us to the left hand. As we passed by it, it fell in after us and walked with Mrs Butler.

Mr. D. and I turned and looked upon them, and heard them talk. We walked a little way further, stopped and looked upon them, and heard them talk again; but they spoke with so low a voice we could not understand them. The spirit appeared in personal form, white as snow, about as tall as Mrs. Butler.

It was now day-break. I turned my eyes from the object, and in half a minute looked toward it again, but it was gone. Mr. D. then told me he saw it disappear. PAUL SIMSON.

TESTIMONY V.

Testimony of Mr. Samuel Ingalls.

August 13—14, 1800. I was at the house of Mr. Blaisdel in the evening, with about forty people: went into the cellar with a candle, which discovered to us the whole cellar, so that no person here could be concealed from us. The light being put out, we heard a knocking. It was spoken

*It was matter of trial to some christians among us, that the Spirit should thus associate with one who never gave the least evidence of piety: But the Spirit informed them, out of her hearing, that Mrs. Butler was one of the elect, and would repent before she left the world.

to, and a voice shrill and pleasant, like what I never heard before, answered, (and talked with us.) Mr. Downing asked her if she knew him, she said, yes: and called him by name three times. She often uttered her sentences three times. He asked the Spirit if she had never been at his house. The answer was that she had been there once.

Capt. P. S. said, "You know as much as a thousand of us;" "Yes, yes;" she answered, "but it will not be long before some here will know as much."

Mr. Blaisdel asked the Spirit when she experienced her change. She answered that it was on her death bed; and then uttered the words, "Glory, glory, glory. Alleluia."

After some silence, some person asked the Spirit, "Are you about to leave us?" She answered, I must go when Jesus calls. I must appear and walk with you this night; but you must walk in order. I will walk behind with L. and told us that she had walked with her before. If you do, said Mrs. Butler, I shall faint away. No, said the Spectre, you shall not faint again; and then said to the people, "If she faints again,* don't you believe me.†

Mrs. Butler never fainted after this. We went to Capt. M's, and stood there. Mrs. Butler walked, as I was told she was before ordered, several rods from us, and I saw something appear white by her side, but no personal form. I heard Mrs. Butler say that when the Spirit was with her and talked with her, she was not so much afraid, as when she expected her coming.

SAMUEL INGALLS.

TESTIMONY VI.

Testimony of Mr. James Springer.

August 13, 1800. After much conversation with the Spectre, she told us that she must talk and appear at the house of Capt. M. because he had reported that she could not be any where but at Mr. Blaisdel's house. And L. must walk with me, said she, that you may all see that she is one person and I another.

We walked in order to that house, and I saw the Spirit as plainly as ever I saw any person. I saw the Spirit appear and disappear several time that night. * * * * *

JAMES SPRINGER.

A part of this testimony is lost.

* She had several times fainted before.

† "Don't you believe a word of all that I have told you," say some who heard it.

TESTIMONY VII.

Testimony of Mr. John Simson.

August 8, 1800. I heard the discourse of the Spectre, in company with about thirty other persons. The sound of her voice was sometimes hoarse and faint, but for the most part it was clear and free from any impediment, and then it was inimitable, and the most delightful that ever I heard in my life. In discoursing with her parents, she said, "My dear parents, if the Lord should call you to go away with me this night, are you willing." I fear I am not, said her father, but the Lord can make me willing. Yes, she answered, and none but he.

While Mr. U. was talking with her, he observed that there were among us various distinctions of christians, as Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists, and asked which of all these are right. There are good and bad of all these sorts, said she, for the elect's sake. Mr. N. H. expressed his desire to handle her. Handle me and see, said she: for Christ tells you that a Spirit hath not flesh and bones. Accordingly, after it was broad day-light, and we could all plainly see each other, the outer cellar door being open, he extended his arms round the space in which the voice was then speaking, and exclaimed, "O, there is nothing here." The voice and this experiment were about four feet from me, so that I am sure that no living person could be concealed from me.*

JOHN SIMSON.

TESTIMONY VIII.

Testimony of Mr. Richard Downing.

August 9, 1800. I went to the house of Mr. Blaisdel with a number more. After sometime we heard a knocking. Then four persons with me went into the cellar. A light was called for and brought. We searched the cellar to see if no person or thing might be found there whence that knocking might proceed. Then the light was carried up, and immediately there was the sound of knocking. Mr. Blaisdel and Mr. D——ns several times asked what was wanted. At length a voice answered, that, if we would all go into the cellar, we should be satisfied;† we then all went

*She now talked without appearing. It was the next night after this, that the attempt was made to handle her while she appeared.

†The last member of this sentence is matter of dispute.

down.* There was then in my hearing, much disorder and much profanity among the people. Nothing remarkable being heard, all but three or four of us left the cellar. Then again there was a knocking several times, we spoke, but obtaining no answer, I also went up.

Soon after I was informed that the voice had spoken to those who remained there, declaring that we must all return, and we went again. Immediately there was a knocking all round the cellar by several persons there, as they afterwards owned to me. Mr. Blaisdel desired them to be peaceable and give room. After a few minutes, Mr. D——ns expressed his sorrow that so many should be deceived, and advised us to pray and return home. We therefore returned as unsatisfied as we went.

On the 13th, while I was very much engaged in business, I felt very much concerned for Mr. Blaisdel, on account of his troubles, and thought I would go and see him, and advise him to a settlement, to prevent the expense of the law. I went, and he asked me the cause of my coming. I answered, to visit him as a friend. I am glad to see you, said he, you went away the other night very unsatisfied. You did not then appear to be afraid: would you not be daunted now? I told him I did not think I should. Providence, said he, has sent you here, I believe, and you must tarry all night. I told him I would. Then he informed me that he had talked with the Spirit in the forenoon, which directed him to persuade certain people to come to his house. About an hour after sunset, the Spectre knocked; and being addressed, answered, "I have come to satisfy you all; who is now speaking to me?" It was answered, Mr. Blaisdel. Let him and every one of this family, said the spectre, go out from here.

They went out. The voice then said that Mr. Blaisdel's family were all clear of what was alledged against them.

*This shews that this witness was not in the cellar, when the preceding sentence was uttered. They who were there, say that it was the Spectre who said, *they must come down*, and Mr. Blaisdel who added that *they should be satisfied*. Others tell us that the sentence was, "Come down *in order*, and you shall be satisfied."

Make the worst of it; it was but innocent inaccuracy, like what is recorded of angels in the scriptures. Possibly the ghost did not foresee this confusion. Certain it is, that she constantly and strictly insisted upon order and solemnity, as indispensably requisite to her manifestations. After all, if the ghost has ever uttered one falsehood, or *one* false accusation, with the manifest design of injurious deception; or, if she has ever committed or ordered the commission of *one* crime; we must, without hesitation, condemn her as an evil angel. But then we must remember that her criminality should first be proved, not by our surmises or conjectures, but by substantial, plenary, and indubitable evidence.

After this, the voice talked with me. To know what answer would be made, I asked, to whom are you speaking? It answered, "Richard Downing." I asked again, was you ever at my house? It answered, "Yes, I was there once with my mother, Mrs. M. and others, when your wife was sick." I had not then told any person what the Spectre now told me, and which I and my family know to be true. Her mother asked* how long before her decease, she experienced her change. She answered, when I was on my death bed.

Soon after the Spirit said to the whole company, I will walk with you to the next house, if you will walk in order, two and two, singing a Psalm as you go; for God is a God of order. I asked her what Psalm we should sing? Any, said she, which may suit best. We then left the cellar, sang and prayed, and immediately the token was given by knocking. We then placed ourselves in order and walked on toward Capt. M's house.

Anxious to unveil the deception, if there was any, I walked near those who were foremost, and was first at the door and knocked. Capt. M. came to the door and asked what all this meant. I answered, they are come to visit you. Immediately I went and stood on the trap-door—the only door of the cellar, that no person might go into it without my knowledge. Some of the company told Capt. M. our design, and he made us welcome. Then hearing the miraculous sound under the floor, Capt. M. with others, went down and talked with a voice, which I heard and understood not; but was informed by them that she told them she had come there to give evidence that she could be and talk at other houses, as well as that of Mr. Blaisdel; and that if the company would properly stand in the open field, she would pass before them, so that they might see her. The company did so. The Spirit then appeared and walked back and forth, two or three times, in view of the company and by the side of Mrs. Butler. This my eyes saw. The apparition, with Mrs. Butler, having advanced a few rods, disappeared. Mrs. Butler then came and told us that if we would return to Mr. Blaisdel's house, she would walk behind us. The company complied. Having a desire so be as near the apparition as possible, I walked with Capt. P. S. behind the whole company. Mrs. Butler walked behind

*Here is a little mistake. It was not her mother, but Mr. Blaisdel who proposed this question, by her mother's desire expressed to him.

Capt. P. S. as she had been ordered by the apparition. When we had walked about twenty rods, Mrs. Butler said, "there it is now." Where, said I. There, said she, pointing to the left side of the company forward. I looked there and saw the dark appearance of a person, and kept my eye upon it till we passed by it, and till I saw it come in next after me, and by the side of Mrs. Butler. Thus it followed us. But now this object was become as white as the light. As we walked, I kept my eye upon this object almost without intermission, that I might see it disappear. It followed us by one direct motion, like a cloud. The motion was not ambulatory in the least degree. In this manner the apparition followed us about twenty rods, and then disappeared in my view. It opened into two parts and vanished.

RICHARD DOWNING.

TESTIMONY IX.

Testimony of Capt. Samuel Simson.

August 5, 1800. In the evening after I had prayed, I looked toward the opposite side of the room, and saw a white personal form, having on a woman's cap, and the same countenance and features which Mrs. N. Butler had when she was alive and in health, so that I knew her immediately. In the name of the Lord, said I, for what purpose are you here?—But there was no answer. I spoke again—"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who are you, and what do you want here?" My wife greatly surprised, and seeing nothing, asked what was the matter. I told her I saw an apparition. No, she replied, you are deranged. It is the moon you see. At that moment the apparition disappeared. When we were composed, we agreed to mention the matter to no person, and we conducted accordingly.

Two nights after, Mr. Blaisdel called us up about two o'clock, and informed us that the Spirit had been at his house, and sent him to call for more evidence. He desired that we would go with him to his house. Well, said my wife, she appeared here the night before last. Then perhaps she has performed the message before me, said Mr. Blaisdel. We went to his house. Hearing nothing for some time, by the desire of Mr. Blaisdel I prayed with the company who had collected there. Immediately after, we heard the usual sound on the side of the house. We all went into the cellar, and heard an articulate voice unlike any sound which I ever heard before.

SAMUEL SIMSON.

TESTIMONY X.

Testimony of Mrs. Sarah Simson.

I can attest to the truth of what my husband has now related, and further, that when we were in the cellar, the spirit told us that she was once N. H. N. B. repeating the words three times, "you have done right," said she, "you have united in prayer: and it is true what that man said, who made the prayer, he did see me with a cap on." I am sure Mr. Blaisdel could have told no one of it, for we had not told him, nor any one else that the apparition had appeared with that article of dress. I asked the spirit, are you from happiness or misery? She replied, "I am from above, I am not from beneath. I have come on God's errand." Then she sung alleluias, and mentioned the cherubim and seraphim. She told me that my child which I had lost was in heaven, praising God with the angels. I should have spoken to that man, said she, the other night, if some person had not been affrightened. I asked, who was it? She answered, it was his wife. Mr. Blaisdel and Capt. M. asked several questions, and the answers were wonderful.

August 9-10. I tarried after the people in general went off with the opinion that the words of the spirit were in reality the words of Mrs. Butler. I was much surprised with the sound of knocking, which made the house tremble. I then heard Mrs. Butler say, "If I am guilty, let her stay away. If I am clear, let her come and clear me." In a few minutes after, she arose from a bed on which she had sat, and stood wringing her hands in distress. What have I done, said she, that I must be accused of all this. "Nothing, dear, you have done nothing, but you must go into the cellar," answered a voice in a vacant space where no person was—a voice the most delightful that ever I heard.

Some of the people then told her that she must do as the spirit had said. So I must, said she, if I dont she will come into the room, and if she does, I shall die. She then went down with a number of others, and immediately came up, and told me that she was released. I was soon after informed, that the spirit was about to appear, and that we must all be present. I went with the rest, but prayed that I might not see her. She had promised that none should see her but those who desired it. Accordingly I did not see her, though I looked directly before me, where they said she was.

August 13. I was again at the same house, and while I was sitting in the room, near a candle, two persons came and looked upon a watch, and found it twelve, and said it was exactly what the spectre had just told. At one o'clock they came again, and found the same agreement.

SARAH SIMSON.

TESTIMONY XI.

Testimony of Mrs. Abigail Abbott.

August 0, 1800. I was at Mr. Blaisdel's house, with many more. In the first part of the night there was much indecent conduct, and some profanity. The spirit knocked sometimes, but uttered only a few words. The company in general having in vain waited to see or hear something extraordinary, withdrew; but I tarried with several other persons. Soon after they were gone, the spectre knocked several times very loud, and we went into the cellar. After saying many things to us, she appeared in the shape of a person and moved before us, without stepping, passing and repassing several times. She gave so much light that we could see other persons and other things in the cellar, which we could not see before her appearance, nor afterwards. I saw her appear and disappear several times. At last the apparition came to Capt. G. Butler, and then he appeared to be immersed in her radiance so that he appeared white and shining like the apparition. And I did particularly see his hand in the midst of the apparent body of the apparition. He cried in surprise, "Lord Jesus Christ."

August 13-14, I was there again, and heard much conversation of the ghost, with several other persons in the cellar, concerning several events known only to her and them in her life time. To all their questions she gave satisfactory answers.

Once while she was speaking, I saw a bright shining appearance in that part of the space from whence the voice proceeded.

Her conversation and exhortation continued four hours. One of the company observed to her that we were an hardened people. "Yes," she answered, "But the Lord will call in his elect in his own time." I went to Capt. M's with the company, but did not then see her at all.

ABIGAIL ABBOT.

TESTIMONY XII.

Testimony of Miss Dorcas Abbot.

I can attest, as an eye and ear witness, to all that is declared under August 9th, in the last testimony.

I plainly saw Capt. Butler's hand go through the apparition.
DORCAS ABBOT.

TESTIMONY XIII.

Testimony of Mr. Frederic Housoff.

I was an eye and ear witness of all the facts declared in the last testimony, and can attest particularly that I plainly saw Capt. Butler put his hand on the apparition, and saw his hand pass through it, glowing with the light of it.

FREDERIC HOUSOFF.

TESTIMONY XIV.

Testimony of Mr. Joseph Blaisdel.

I was present when the important transaction took place on the night of August 9, 1800, and saw Mr. Butler's hand pass through the body of the apparition, while he uttered the words, "Lord Jesus." He afterwards informed me and others, that while his hand passed through the breast of the Spectre, he felt nothing.

JOSEPH BLAISDEL.

TESTIMONY XV.

Testimony of Capt. Paul Blaisdel.

I have seen and discoursed with the apparition several times. In the latter part of January, 1800, I saw her in the field; first at a considerable distance from me: then she came to me, and I particularly observed that she never touched the ground. Her raiment appeared as white as possible. The next evening she reproved me in the hearing of several persons, because I had not spoken to her, and because I had spoken against her. She told me she had come on God's errand, and that if I opposed her, I opposed him who sent her.

The Spirit asked me if I lived in such a manner as I would wish to die.*

I have from time to time heard the voice speak in open

*This sentence was uttered at another time. It is believed by some, among whom is the writer, that several interviews mentioned in the last letter were not those of N. H., but of another Spectre. This may be somewhat difficult, and doubtless not essentially necessary to prove.

space, where I am sure no living person existed, as others can testify who were with me.* And upon August 9-10, I was present and saw the Spectre when she appeared, and I plainly saw Capt. Butler's hand pass through the apparition.

August 11, I saw her again, and heard her pious discourse, with nearly twenty other persons. To those who were present, I said, "She has her child now in her arms." "Yes, I have," she answered, "yes I have." She came so near to me and others, that either of us could have handled her without changing our places.

August 13. Being informed that the ghost had promised to come this night, I left my father's house, and went to Capt. M's that I might not see nor hear her. Just before daylight, she came to this house with more than forty people, and reproved me again for speaking against her in the presence of six or seven persons. This is the second time, said the voice, that you have been warned.—Beware of the third time. She asked me several times to handle her, to see whether she had material substance or not. I confessed to her that I believed her to be the spirit of N. H. Then I went back with the company to my father's house. Before she vanished she came and stood within three feet from me.† The personal shape was all light, the particles of which had constant motion. But I was afraid to put my hand upon her.

PAUL BLAISDEL.

TESTIMONY XVI.

Testimony of Mr. David Hooper.

January 2, 1800. By the request of the spectre, sent by two messengers, I went to Mr. Blaisdel's house, and by conversing with her, obtained such clear and irresistible tokens of her being the spirit of my own daughter, as gave me no less satisfaction than admiration and delight.

She gave a reason satisfactory to me why she put me to the trouble of coming there instead of her coming to my house.

By her request I went in a few days after to Mr. Butler's family and expressed my conviction to them.

August 8, I was there again, with my wife and many

*That is, that they experienced the same.

† "Before she vanished." That is, before she vanished for the last time that morning, for this was after she had vanished in the view of Mr. Downing, as in Testimony 8.

others. I again asked the ghost who she was. The voice answered, "I was once N. B., your dear child. If the Lord should call you this night, are you willing to go with me?" I said the Lord can make me willing. Yes, she replied, and none but he. Then she mentioned certain articles of property which she had left, as belonging to us. I hope, said I, these matters do not disturb you. "No, no," she answered, "No, no. Peace. There must be peace."

DAVID HOOPER.

TESTIMONY XVII.

Testimony of Mrs. Joanna Hooper.

Her next words were spoken to me in particular. "Do you not remember what I said on my death bed?" I answered, yes, I do remember that you then said you desired peace while you lived. Yes, I did, said she, yes I did.—Sometime before this the spectre had sent this token to me, which, though not certain, had yet been attended with such circumstances, as rendered the use of it for deception utterly improbable.

August 13, we went again. The spirit then asked if we wanted to see her, and we both said no. Did I ask you in your last sickness, said I, whether you was willing your child should live? The voice answered, "yes, yes, and I told you I should be a vile creature to desire the life of the child." [For that was the time in which it was God's will it should die.*] I asked this question for further satisfaction, knowing that this very question and answer had passed between us.

The spirit then told us that she had not freedom to converse on the night of August 9, by reason of disorder and profanity, and expressed her liberty and joy in discoursing with christians. In the midst of her discourse with others, I silently indulged my painful reflections on the distress of her last sickness. Suddenly I was surprised with these words of the voice to me, "Mourn not for me, for I am a happy soul."

Capt. P. S. observed that her free conversation with us was a great wonder. "Yes, a miracle, said she, such as never was since Christ was upon earth."† When she had

*These last words declared to me by other witnesses are not in the original testimony of Mrs. H. I have therefore enclosed them.

†Her messages were probably such as never were since Christ was on earth. Some of them are contrary to all expectation, and exposed the families of Mr.

told us that without a change of heart, mankind would be miserable, I desired Mr. Blaisdel to ask her when she experienced her own change. He asked, and she answered, "When I was on my death bed." Mr. D. proposed this question, "Do I believe that you are such as you profess to be?" Her reply was, "You have believed, and you have not believed, and satan will tempt you again." Then he asked, "Was you ever at my house in your lifetime?" "Yes, once, yes, once," said she. I knew the time of this visit, for Mrs. M. and I were there with her. By my desire therefore, Mr. D. asked, "Who was there with you." "My mother and Mrs. M., said she, when your wife was sick." Then Mr. D. told the people that he remembered she had been there at that time. Have you been any where but here, said he, since your death. Yes, she answered, to five places.

Mr. Blaisdel's family being now excluded from that apartment where the spirit was, she told us that Mr. Blaisdel's family were innocent. "They say I am a witch and a devil, said she, and they said that Christ was a devil. It is reported that some of this family have raised me, but it is not in the power of man or devil to fetch a soul from heaven."

After much more conversation the spirit told us that she would walk with us to Capt. M's, and to another house beyond it; but she only walked with us to Capt. M's, and there talked with him and Capt. P. B. to convince them who she was.

When we had come within twenty rods of the house, the company stopped. Then we two looked round and saw a white shining appearance by the side of Mrs. Butler, and about as tall as she.† After this, we observed nothing worthy of particular notice.

JOANNA HOOPER.

Did Mrs. Hooper assist in the work of personating her own daughter? If not, how could the deceiver know what questions she would ask? Do some of these things appear small? *Minima minimis gaudent.*‡

TESTIMONY XVIII.

Testimony of Mrs. Eunice Scammons.

August 11, 1800. I was at the house which the ghost had Blaisdel, Mr. Hooper, Capt. Butler, and Mrs. Butler, in particular, to unjust reproach. Therefore the loving kindness of the Lord to these families, made the proofs as extraordinary as the messages, that whoever shall calumniate either of these families, on account of these events, may do it at their peril.

*Mr. D. has since declared that he had found all these words to be true.

†They saw no personal form.

‡The greatest things are from among the least.

so often visited, and was one of seventeen people or more, who were present when she appeared and conversed with us. After she had discoursed particularly with several persons, she said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord and make his paths strait. But you who are sinners, do not make them strait. Some of you say that I am not a Spirit. Others, that I am an evil Spirit. The words which I have spoken unto you, have been misimproved, perverted and turned to ridicule. But I shall see you all when you will not laugh."

In the intervals of conversation, she sang praises.

Being asked who she was, she said, "I was once N. H. and when I died I was N. B.," and mentioned several circumstances which attended her death to confirm her declaration.

After much other conversation, she appeared in the midst of us and talked while she appeared. She came so near me that I could have laid my hand upon her. She had before solemnly entreated us to stand round separate and in such order that all might see her while she moved in the midst of us.* Within our two ranks she slowly passed and re-passed from end to end three times, and passed by me six times. There were several persons in the company dressed in white; but I could not see them at all, while the Spectre was as white as any thing could possibly be. She moved in such nearness to every one of us, that every one might have handled her. I saw her vanish instantly in the midst of us. After this, she spake to us again by exhortation. I am sent, said she, to warn you against sin. I was myself o great sinner when I lived in this world. In my last hours, I received mercy. But if you go on in a course of sin and waste your time as I did, it may not be so with you. One half hour now gives me more happiness than this whole world can give you through your whole lives.

It was now daylight, and she observed to us that it was the Lord's day, that we must retire to our homes and keep it holy. She desired Mr. Blaisdel to pray with us before we parted.

After many other words, she left us singing alleluias to God and the Lamb. I heard the voice of her praises sounding further and further from us, for a considerable time before it entirely ceased uttering the words, "Alleluia, alle-

*The order was nearly elliptical; for the two ranks were joined by certain persons at each end.

luia. Glory, glory to God and the Lamb." Her notes were solemn and exceedingly delightful. Then we all went up, and Mr. Blaisdel's prayer was our dismissal.

EUNICE SCAMMONS.

TESTIMONY XIX.

Testimony of Mrs. Mary Bragdon.

Sometime in January, 1800, I was at the house of Mr. Blaisdel, and heard such a voice as I never heard before among the living; and they told me it was that of the Spirit, talking with Mr. and Mrs. Butler.

August 7. At the same house we heard a knocking on the partition next to the chimney, where no person could be. Then several persons with me went into the cellar, and the Spirit told us she was once Nelly Butler. She told me that I must not be scared.

August 13. I was again at the house with forty-eight others, besides children. The Spirit, after her conversation with several persons, exhorted the youth: "I was once young and vain as you, said the voice, and, if the Lord had taken me away in that condition, how miserable I should have been! Now is the time, while you are young, to seek the Lord. Delay not till it is too late." Then it was that I saw a white personal form shining in the space from whence the voice proceeded; and I afterwards saw the same appearance in the field.

MARY BRAGDON.

TESTIMONY XX.

Testimony of Mrs. Dorcas Johnson.

I was present at the house, and at the time dated, August 13, by other testimonies. There I heard and saw the Spectre. Her voice was distinct from any other, and her music the most delightful that I ever heard. When she walked with us, she moved without stepping. And when we arrived at the house, by direction of the Spectre given to my brother, James Springer, and by him to the company in our hearing, we opened to the right and left, so that the Spectre and Mrs. Butler passed together between our two ranks. Then she vanished from my view and I saw her no more.

DORCAS JOHNSON.

MISCELLANEOUS REFLECTIONS.

Two Inferences naturally arise from this topic: one is that of caution. "Judge not that ye be not judged."

The above witnesses are exhibited, not for the want of more, (for more than a hundred have seen the Spectre, or have heard her words,) but because repetition is tedious.

Our opponents now, we expect, will admit our inquiry of what they have to say against these attestations, whether any thing false—whether any thing even wearing a deceptive color has been presented to public notice.

It would have been my peculiar pleasure to have given more satisfaction with regard to the superior ends of the messages, subservient, no doubt, to still greater ends, if it had been lawful. But for the present, they are immediately interesting only to a few persons. The knowledge which many would improve, others would abuse. If the answer of the oracle intended for the personal safety of David and his men, is immediately published, Saul will know it.

When a creature professedly brings us a message from God, be this message ever so small, ever so strange, ever so unexpected; yet, if it does not oppose his word, we have not the least evidence that the profession is counterfeit, unless we obtain it by other means; because we are as yet ignorant of its connections, and God's thoughts and plans are not like ours.

Some say, if the message appear not in the scriptures, that will sufficiently condemn it and the messenger too, whatever be the credentials, "I will obey nothing but what I see in the scriptures."* But may I not say, with Doctor Owen, that they unwarrantably limit the Holy One of Israel? In absolute monarchies the people dare not say, "I will obey no precept from the king, unless I find it in the public code." Such language would breathe rebellion. And dare we treat thus the King of kings, who is an absolute monarch, and by his propriety in the universe has a right to be such? Will the scriptures themselves warrant this behavior? Can we despise the message and them who heard it, and them who obeyed it, and the angels who brought it, and yet stand guiltless before Him who sent it? until we obtain proof that

*Whatever message enlarges or diminishes their doctrine or worship, must undoubtedly be rejected and the messenger too. But beware of extremes.

he did not send it, and that the credentials are forgery? And are we one inch nearer to this point, than we were twenty-six years ago? Do we perceive *now* any more than twenty-six years ago, how the deceiver talked in open space, by a voice inimitable, clearly understood by some, and not at all by others, with means of intelligence every way equal? Our blessed Lord, to prove that he was not a Spectre, said, "Handle me and see." That is implicitly to say, if you handle me and find no substance, then you may conclude that I am a spirit. Our Spectre said, "Handle me and see:" And earnestly insisted on this experiment time after time. Can we tell *now*, why that very argument and mode of evidence which Christ himself used, is not valid and genuine, any more than we could twenty-six years ago? If not, let me be cautious, whatever be the conduct of this enlightened age, how I accuse my neighbors of folly or villainy, merely because they enjoyed interviews with a departed friend; lest I be found among those who speak evil of things which they understand not.

The Jews, besides their public code of revelation, had their Urim and Thummim for the particulars of duty. Is it certain? Is it even rational to suppose that the few answers of that oracle mentioned in the scriptures, are the only ones ever communicated? Prophets, too, were sent to manifest the particulars of duty, and angels, some of whom *might be* the spirits of just men. And we have no reason to doubt but Moses was a Spectre when he conversed with Christ on the Holy Mount; notwithstanding that old fiction of his resurrection, which has dishonored the antiquities of Josephus.

Now the question is, what person ever yet demonstrated that no such occasional revelation was ever wanted in any hour since the completion of the scriptures? Certainly this completion never precluded spectral missions in the view of the christian fathers. And their continuation has been the constant faith of christians in general, down to this day of deism. And the war of the deists against this opinion is easily accounted for: because the admission of Spectres is the admission of miracle; and the admission of occasional revelation, brings a question to their door which would be a troublesome neighbor. *Why then should not a revelation be needful for the public?* Great is their obligation to modern christians for their assistance in this warfare. It may be asked, if these missions have been thus continued, why have

they generally been attended with so few witnesses? But if there be evidence enough for him, or those who are interested in the message, it is sufficient for their purpose, whether others believe it or not.

When David was told by the Urim that the men of Keilah would deliver him into the hand of Saul, no person appears to have been present but Abiather; but if the oracle was attended with the evidence described by Josephus, there was evidence enough for the purpose of David and his men, whether five other persons in the whole nation believed it or not.

After all, it is not our duty to expect apparitions, for they never come to gratify curiosity; nor to pray for their coming, unless our case be peculiar as that of Manoah; nor to entertain the idea that their speaking to us, would make a more durable impression than the preaching of the living. Such conduct and apprehensions are erroneous, and expose us to greater delusion. Our Lord has expressly taught us that, if we believe not Moses and the prophets, neither shall we be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. And accordingly the affectionate and persuasive addresses of the Spectre in this place, which drew tears from every eye, had no happy, durable influence on the unregenerate character in a single instance.

It was necessary that religion should appear in all her conduct and conversation, otherwise her profession would have been justly suspected. But on that Lord's day morning, mentioned in several testimonies, she did not say to the people, *Tarry and hear me*. No, but "Retire to your homes, read the bible, pray and keep the day holy."* That is to say, attend to those ample and most suitable means of grace which God has appointed for you in his written word.

The preaching of the gospel was not her design; but she had other designs which appropriate the sentence, "I am not to be trifled with."

In some old fashioned minds, her familiar conversation may excite the suspicion of necromancy and divination, by a *familiar* spirit, so plainly forbidden in the law of Moses: and then doubtless Mrs. Butler must bear the accusation. But there is no evidence that this angel conversed more familiarly with her than with others who were never suspected. She conversed familiarly with all those who had much conversation with her.

*There was no preacher in the town that day.

The ancient idea of a familiar spirit appears not to have been obtained from the familiar conversation of any person with a spirit, (though sometimes the inquirer might be deceived by the artificial resemblance of it) but from the opinion that certain persons had a spirit foreign to their own, residing in them and uttering oracles from their bodies.* These persons were a sort of ventriloquists. Their conduct is described by Rollin in his account of the Grecian Oracles. The speech of their familiar spirit was imagined to proceed, not from the lips of any person, but from a part of their own bodies, in some manner artificially swollen. This is confirmed by their very name *Abefeth*, in the Hebrew language, which has the signification of swelling. The familiar spirit itself was called *Afeb*, which is the same noun in the singular number. The swollen part and the familiar spirit, which was imagined to reside in it, had one name. "Divine unto me by the *Afeb*," said Saul, 1 Sam. 28: 8. Divine unto me by the *swelling*, and bring me up whom I shall name unto thee. But it does not appear that the woman had any time for divination. She saw Samuel unexpectedly, and cried out for fear:† and Samuel, instead of being familiar with her, never spake a single word to her. Now it is not even pretended that any such token of *Afeb* or necromancy, have appeared among us.

Doubtless this wickedness among the ancients, was for the most part legerdemain,‡ and their predictions always uncertain, as appears not only from their ambiguity, but from the public estimation of some oracles in preference to others, and of the Delphic oracle above all the rest.

From the observations now made, we learn the criminality of witchcraft or legerdemain, for there is no essential difference between them.

To counterfeit the royal seal was ever a capital crime. How presumptuously criminal then are they, who counterfeit the royal

* *To have a familiar spirit*, as expressed in the Old Testament, and, *To have a demon*, as expressed in the New; seem to be phrases of the same import, and the idea of it was that of criminality. But we find no person in the New Testament justly accused of it.

Demoniacs were of another description. They were esteemed innocent, and pitied, as being afflicted by the demons.

Possibly this in part was the true evil which afflicted part of our land in 1692, and which our pious ancestors unhappily mistook for witchcraft.

†The original of verse 11—12, is strictly thus: "And he said, bring me up Samuel. And the woman saw Samuel and cried out." This strongly intimates that Samuel came unexpectedly and without any previous divination. The word *when*, in our translation has no responsive in the original.

‡Not altogether such, why else should the oracles cease at the time of our Saviour's birth? Legerdemain found no more difficulty afterwards than before. God did in his righteous judgment, choose the delusions which they had chosen for themselves. He sometimes fulfilled their predictions, Deut. 13: 1, 2, 3. Ezek. 21: 22 to 25; and might sometimes, though very seldom, suffer such real miracles as were either vain, or injurious; but never those of benevolence. Compare the magic of Egypt with Rev. 16: 14. The demons drowned the swine, but never gave rain; Isa. For satan must not oppose satan.

seal of heaven! The certificate of divine revelation, such is the conduct of every mountebank, while the spectator is left ignorant of his art. His false miracles spread a cloud of uncertainty over the minds of men, so that many are at loss how to distinguish the true miracle, the true seal of the King of heaven, from its counterfeit. And they who countenance and encourage such persons, are guilty of far greater evil than the great evil of wasting time and property. But such behaviour is the food of infidelity. No wonder it is so common at the present day.

Whether the writer is one who gives such countenance and encouragement, is for the next writer on the subject of these pages to shew,* not by pointing out inaccuracies here and there, for this any person may easily do, but by presenting to the public a complete, satisfactory analysis of this whole mystery.

To his particular notice, I ask leave to offer a few cautionary observations; if needless for him, they may assist another.

Among so many of us who have heard and seen the Spectre, it would be very strange, if, in the course of twenty-six years past, no one should have deviated from the strait line of perfect rectitude. If imperfection should be found among us, and the publicity of it will cast any light upon this subject, by all means let it come forth: if not, let him, who is without sin, cast the first stone.

The question is not, *How have we conducted*, unless our conduct be such as invalidates our evidence: for we are liable to evil every day; but, *How has the Spectre conducted?* and *who could she be?* It has been frequently reported among people at a distance from this scene, for more than twenty years, that the whole business was an artifice, and fairly proved to be such. We who believe the existence of the Spectre, have thought that this inaccurate on dit has had currency long enough. Our respondent, therefore, will not fail to shew our mistake, by demonstrating that this report is indeed correct. Suppose then, (no matter how distant the supposition is from what has really happened) suppose then, I say, that, in the course of his zealous inquiries, our respondent should find that he, who pretends to have discovered the plot, is a witness in favor of the Spectre, and that his testimony was connected with a solemn and public profession of his firm belief that the Spectre was really such as she professed to be. Suppose further, that in contemplating the dates of these events, our respondent should find that the discovery preceded that testimony and that solemn, public profession: to say nothing of the numerous other witnesses who might contradict him: In such a case I should imagine that a discerning, wary and unprejudiced reader would give but a cold assent to his process of demonstration.

It is my earnest desire that the reply may honor the author by the expressions of candor, philanthropy and grand thought. If his

*Should they appear worthy of such painful notice.

talent be that of a Swift or a Juvenal, his temptation will be great, to adopt the loose style of the infidel. Let not compliance deceive the unwary. Between ridicule and reasoning the distinction is eternal. The most important and solemn truths have been the subject of both. The sober school of Socrates furnished a comedy for the Athenian stage. And Voltaire could tell us from the Apocalypse, how incommodious their situation will be who shall inhabit the upper story of New Jerusalem.

Unhappy man! thy fruits of genius furnished a feast of intellectual dainties. But the figs of Cleopatra covered the basilisk, and a world was ruined by the tree of knowledge. The termination of Satyre was horror; and the pure day of awful truth now glaring upon thee from every point, has impressed sobriety eternal.

The result of this whole inquiry is that of consolation. Our death will not be total. Our souls will survive our bodies. We shall think and reason and know the moral conduct of this world, and perhaps the very names of particular persons, after our bodies are turned to dust.

Among us are a considerable number of people who say that the Spectre knew and told them their thoughts past, present or future, or all three; and such thoughts as she could not have known or conjectured by ordinary means. To one of them, whose veracity is doubted by none, she foretold the time, before several witnesses, when his mind would be struck with horror for opposing her messages.

When the time was come, which was about six months after the prediction, his mind at first, as he informed me, was calm as usual. To disturb him he saw nothing, expected nothing, and was about to reject the prediction as nothing. Instantly he was surprised by a new train of ideas. The evil of his conduct was set in order before him, and his distress was apparent to others, as some of them, whose witness cannot for a moment be suspected, informed me.

Now this instance alone, would prove but little; yet, when connected with ten or twelve others, of undoubted credibility, attesting the same kind of experience, while they have no visible combination by kindred, employment, age or interest, it is certainly worthy of some consideration.

If one departed saint is capable of knowing our thoughts, so may others. That uncorporeal spirits are witnesses of the conduct of this world, appears not only from that of Spectres, but from the scriptures, as in Dan. 8: 13. Rev. 6: 10. Eccl. 5: 6. 1 Tim. 5: 21. No reason can be assigned why our conduct may not be as visible to a saint made perfect, as to an angel: for neither of them can know us by bodily organs, such as we now possess, and their knowledge of our thoughts without these organs, is just as easily accounted for, as their knowledge of our external conduct. The spirits of just men, when they leave this world, are made perfect. "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part

shall be done away. Now I know in part; but then shall I know, even as also I am known." This cannot mean that I shall know other souls and even Christ himself as *perfectly* as he knows me; but I shall know them in the same manner. I shall know other souls *intuitively* as Christ knows me. Indeed, what idea can we have of mere spirits seeing each other, and being present with each other, but that of the mutual intuition of thoughts?

If that day should find the saints as ignorant of the human character as they are at the hour of death, their judgment will be of small account for their own satisfaction or that of others.

And should evasion tell us that Christ and his angels will then reveal to the saints the character of this world; still this character would be only the object of faith, not of sight, and satan and his adherents, could say that the saints had condemned them for the most part by hear-say, and that of those who had always opposed them from the beginning.

Now it does not seem probable that the enemies of Christ will ever find occasion for such a plea as this. Every mouth will be stopped. And the mouths of wicked men will be stopped, not merely by the testimony of foreign angels, but by witnesses taken from their own family, and such too as have been the greatest and most constant friends that ever they had in the world: such as had counselled and warned them—had experienced the most cordial and warmest zeal for their salvation and had often wept for them in secret places. Thus mankind will be judged by their peers. Their quarrel with God and each other, will be decided in their own family. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son," in union with his spiritual members, and there must be knowledge in them for this purpose. And what better method of acquiring it can we conceive so easy and natural as that of their contemplating the moral conduct of mankind through all ages of the world. May we not then indulge the idea that, when the humble and afflicted leave this body of sin and death, they hear the voice of the Beloved saying, "Come ye blessed of my Father:" possess in perfection my spirit of holiness and unerring wisdom, to know as you as are known. Great is the work for which you are ordained. You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many. You must judge the world with me. Henceforth watch their conduct know their character, and prepare for it.

Hence it follows that we do nothing in secret. All our behaviour is known, not only to Christ, but to the watchers, his holy ones. With them is the book of God's remembrance.

O gracious Redeemer, shed abroad thy love in our hearts. May faith and patience have their perfect work. Beautify us with thy moral likeness, that we may be fair in thine eyes and in the eyes of our kindred who dwell with thee. With them at last may we behold thy glory and celebrate thy love forever. ALLELUIA.

